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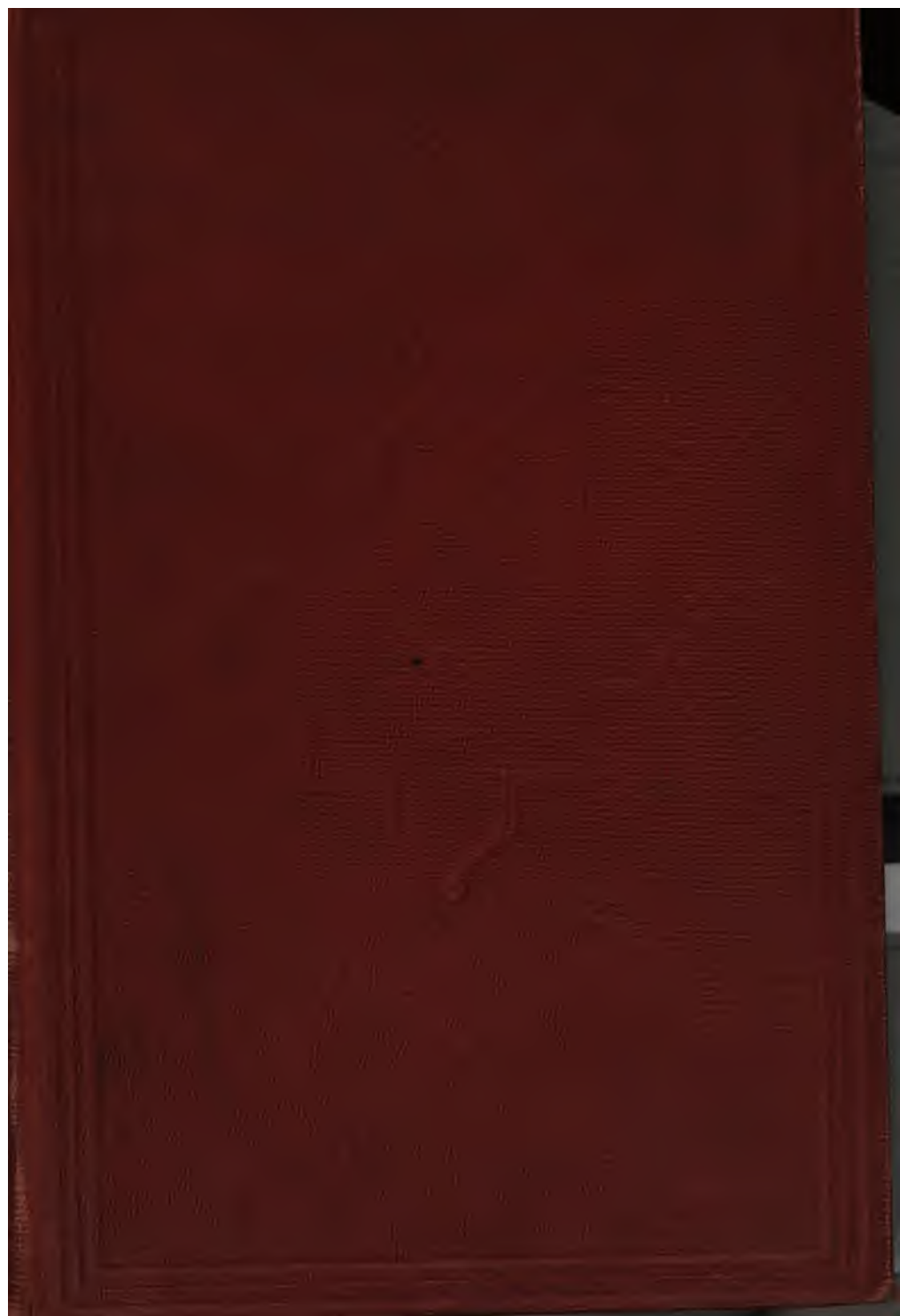
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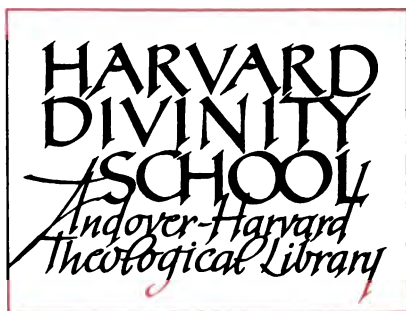
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— زنده بماند —







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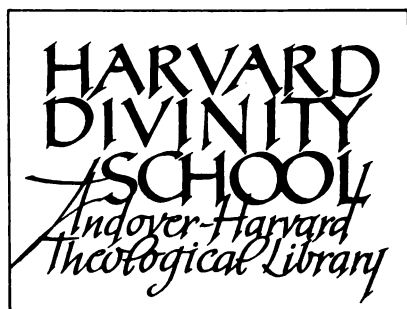
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**FRANKLIN SQUARE.**

**1855.**





Barton

1. 12

Georgia Lowell -





of youth, rather than those of maturity, in the form in which he has presented the truths brought to view, and in the narratives and dialogues with which he has attempted to illustrate them.

In respect to the theology of the work, it takes every where for granted that salvation for the human soul is to be obtained through repentance for past sin, and through faith and trust in the merits and atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Its main design, however, is to enforce the practice, and not to discuss the theory, of religion. Its object is simply to explain and illustrate Christian *duty*, exhibiting this duty, however, as based on those great fundamental principles of faith in which all evangelical Christians concur.

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THE WAY TO DO GOOD, the third volume of the series, is designed to present a practical view of a life of Christian usefulness, and to exhibit in a very plain and simple manner the way in which a sincere and honest follower of Jesus is to honor his sacred profession and advance his Master's cause, by his daily efforts to promote the welfare and happiness of those around him.

HOARYHEAD and M'DONNER, the fourth and last volume of the series, consists of two connected tales, designed to illustrate the very radical character of the change by which the Christian life is begun.

In the treatment of the various topics discussed in these volumes, the author has made it his aim to divest the subject of religion of its scholastic garb, and to present in all plainness and simplicity, and in a manner adapted to the intellectual wants of common readers, the great fundamental principles of truth and duty. It is now many years since the volumes of this series were first issued, and during that time they have been published, in whole or in part, very extensively throughout the Christian world. Besides the wide circulation which the series has enjoyed in this country, numerous editions, more or less complete, have been issued in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Holland, India, and at various missionary stations throughout

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the globe. The extended approbation which the Christian community have thus bestowed upon the plan, and the increasing demand for copies of the several volumes, have led to the republication of the series at this time in a new and much improved form. The works have all been carefully revised by the author for this edition, and they are embellished with numerous illustrative engravings, which it is hoped may aid in making them attractive for every class of readers.

New York, February, 1855.

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I.

**H O A R Y H E A D.**





# HOARYHEAD.

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A substance can not change *its own nature* ; the idea is absurd ; and the human heart, if it is to be altered at all in *its elementary moral affections*, must have the change wrought upon it by the agency of a higher power.

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## CHAPTER I.

FERGUS.

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Interior of the work-shop.

Fire-place.

Great blazing fire.

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It was a stormy afternoon in January, but the interior of the rude work-shop to which we must first introduce our readers presented a very cheerful appearance. There was a vast fire-place in one side of it, in which was a blazing fire, made of chips, ends of boards, and shavings, though the space between the jambs was so wide that the snow-

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Furniture and arrangements of the shop.Talk about Benny.

---

flakes were descending on each side of the fire, down the straight, short chimney. A boy of twelve years of age, with a calm, intellectual-looking face, was sitting on a block in the corner, at work upon a little hand-sled. One window of the shop looked off upon wild forest scenery, and the other, across a neat, sheltered little farm-yard, to a small house opposite. At this second window was a work-bench, with a variety of tools upon and near it. A short, thick man was seated at this bench, upon a three-legged stool, intent upon some wheel work. The snow was beating against the window, and the wind moaned in the chimney.

"Father," said the boy, after both had been working some time in silence, "I don't believe you will get the clock done at six to-night; but then it is so stormy, Mr. James will not come after it."

"It was to-morrow, child, that I was to have it done."

"Why, is not this Thursday?"

"No, it is Wednesday."

"Oh!" said the boy, and went on with his work in silence.

"Then, father," said the boy again, after a little pause, "why are you hurrying so to get it done to-night? There's all to-morrow."

"I don't know about to-morrow; I am afraid little Benny may be very sick to-morrow, and I shall want to stay with him. I wish you would go in and see whether he is asleep."

"Well, father, if you will just let me bore this hole."

The father assented by silence, and the boy planted his centre-bit, and slowly carried his bit-stock round and round, until the curious instrument had cut its way through; he looked for a moment with evident satisfaction at the smooth, clean hole, and then, laying down his work, bounded out of the shop.

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Fergus's mother comes into the shop.Conversation.

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In a few minutes the shop-door opened again, but instead of Fergus there entered a woman of middle age—his mother; and as she stood at the door shaking and brushing off the snow, her husband looked up a moment from his work and said, "Well, wife, how is Benny?"

The spectator, in comparing the two faces now turned toward one another, would have been struck with a remarkable difference between them. The wife was slender, her hair and eye dark, and her countenance strongly expressive of thought and feeling. The husband was short, thick set, with a round, placid face, indicative of good-humor and content, though there was a decided expression of anxiety upon it as he inquired after Benny. In fact, there was solicitude in both countenances, and yet there was a contrast. On the mother's face, anxiety seemed to be at home. It harmonized with the whole cast and character of the features. On the father's, it appeared to be a stranger. It had obtained temporary and unnatural possession. A look of contentment and happiness seemed rightly to belong there.

In a word, there was a difference in temperament. Christian principle taught them both the duty of resignation and content, but the mother found it very difficult to keep pace with the father in the practice of them.

But to return to the dialogue. "How is Benny, wife?" said the workman, looking toward her as she stood at the door.

"Oh, George, he is getting very sick; he moans all the time, and keeps calling for drink."

As she said this she walked toward him and stood by his side, leaning her elbow on the bench, and her cheek on her hand.

"Do you think Fergus could get across the pond, and back before dark?" she asked.



---

Fergus's father is a cripple.Genuine and false submission.

---

She was thinking of his going for the doctor, who lived on the other side of a pond which spread itself out in the valley before the house.

George, as she called him, turned round toward her on his stool, and then, for the first time, the observer might see that he was a cripple. Both limbs had been amputated just below the knee, and patches of coarse leather had been fastened upon the extremities, which served him for shoes; he could thus stump about his shop and yard a little, but for all purposes of a lengthened walk he was helpless.

Ten years before, George had bought the lot of wild land on which he lived for a farm, and after putting up a small log house, brought his wife there, to aid him in forming, by years of labor, a home for their old age. They had spent the early years of their lives in the usual course of ungodliness and selfishness; but they had been changed, and when they came into their comfortable log dwelling the first evening of their married life, they both solemnly gave themselves up to God, and expressed a desire to do his will, and to be dealt with according to his good pleasure.

"Now, Mary," said George, that evening, "we must be honest in this; we must not talk of our submission to God in sunshine, and then resist and struggle when it comes to storm."

Mary saw that this was very good Christian philosophy; but the characteristics of the heart, based on innate qualities and long-established habits, are not to be broken up at once by the perception of a principle of sound philosophy. Mary made a resolution, moreover, that she would be resigned and submissive if a storm should come; but then these inherent tendencies of the soul do not always give way to a good resolution. At any rate, things looked very bright and pleasant then. They had "a beautiful lot of

land," as George called his tract of sturdy forest. He had a very comfortable dwelling, all the furniture they needed, food enough in the loft and in the cellar for the present, and seed enough in the ground for the future, and a large pile of wood at the door, which furnished maple logs for the fire, and pitch-pine strips for candles. Then her imagination, in looking forward, caught bright glimpses of future prosperity—of a framed house with two rooms, spacious barns, and smooth mowing, and George a rich farmer, and perhaps, when the town should be incorporated, a "selectman." Under these circumstances, Mary found it very easy to feel resigned and submissive to God, and she thought it would always be easy to be so.

A few years after this, while George was making some clearings at a little distance from the house, a tree fell upon him, and, after months of sickness and suffering, he walked out one sunny spring morning into his door-yard for the first time, but it was on his knees. Mary had watched over him with great fidelity and love, but with rather too much restlessness and solicitude to be consistent with her previous resolution to be in all cases *entirely resigned* to the divine will. When she thought of the greatness, and wisdom, and benevolence of God, and his past kindness to herself and husband, she *knew* that all was right; but then, when she thought of the farm—the vast amount of severe labor it required, and of her husband's inevitable helplessness, and also of their utter want of any other means of support, and of the loneliness and destitution of such a home for a hopeless cripple, she could not help *feeling* that all was wrong. George himself was patient and contented, and he seemed to have no anxiety for the future. Temperament alone could not have effected this. Piety alone ordinarily does not; but piety aided by a happy temperament seemed to have made him entirely submissive and resign-

Fergus cutting wood.

His father's recovery.

His contentment.

ed, and of course, when the bodily pain was assuaged, contented and happy.

As we have said, he came out, for the first time, one pleasant spring morning, with his crutches, upon the great flat stone which lay at his door. His little son Fergus was trying to cut wood with a heavy axe, laboriously lifting it, and then letting it fall by its own weight upon the log. George looked around a moment upon his fields and clearings, and then upon his little son. Fergus laid down his axe, and came running to meet his crippled parent, exclaiming, "Why, father, are *you* coming out?"

"Yes, I am coming to look at my farm. You will have to be the farmer now; it is all over with me."

"Well, father," said Fergus, "when I am a little bigger. I can cut wood pretty well now."

"Yes, I see you are at work. But let me go and try. I believe I can cut wood a little myself, after all."

He slowly worked his way across the yard, and struck the axe a few times into the green maple log. He gave these blows with hearty good-will, as if he felt a kind of satisfaction in demonstrating to himself that his arms were safe, at any rate.

He was still, however, weak from the effects of his long confinement, and he soon laid down the axe and turned round toward the house.

Mary was at the window. She had been watching her husband's movements, and the whole scene brought so vividly to her view their utterly helpless condition, that she turned away in tears.

George tried to lighten her despondency. He told her she ought to put her trust in God.

"I know," said she, "I ought to trust in God, but what *shall* we do? You can not work any more, and we shall starve."

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Mary's anxious forebodings.Folly of anticipating troubles.

---

"Not to-day, at any rate," said George, "by the looks of your bowl of potatoes." It was a bowl of potatoes which Mary was just about putting into the ashes to roast for their dinner.

"I did not mean to-day," said Mary, a little piqued ; "but the potatoes will not last us long."

"That is true," said he ; "but we will not worry ourselves about that now. The Savior says we must not borrow trouble from to-morrow, for every day has sorrow enough of its own."

Mary was a little nettled. Nobody likes to have Scripture quoted against them, especially if the quotation is such that, under the circumstances, it does not convince, and yet is so apparently applicable as to admit of no ready reply. Mary said that she did not think that people ought to sit down quietly, and let ruin come upon them, without taking any measures to avoid it, under the plea of trusting in God.

Now the truth was that George was not averse to *taking measures* to avert future evil ; what he objected to was *anxiety*. He and Mary had been accustomed to talk every day about their future plans of life, and they were as prudent and economical as they could be. This he considered was doing all he could do, in their present circumstances. Thus he was willing to take thought for the morrow in the sense of planning and contriving for it, but not in the sense of being anxious and unhappy about it. His temperament made this easy. But Mary's mind was always running forward and hovering over future imaginary sorrows. Her temperament made this natural to her. She found in it a sort of painful pleasure, or pleasant pain, whichever expression the reader may consider least paradoxical.

Anticipating trouble is generally very superfluous suffering ; for, as every one will observe, in looking back upon

George's shop.

His prosperity.

The Winding Pond.

his past life, the evils we look forward to, and expect, very generally do not come ; and, on the other hand, those which actually come are those we did not expect. At any rate, it was so in this case, for George never came near to actual want. He had some mechanical talent, and his ingenuity was stimulated by his situation ; so his neighbors used to bring him at first their utensils and implements to repair, paying him in labor on his land, or in the produce of their own. He sold off a large part of his own farm, reserving only a garden spot near his house, which he and Mary cultivated, and the proceeds were gradually invested in a shop and tools. As the forest around was filled up with settlers, and the farms improved, his business increased ; and as he sat, day after day, at his shop window, which looked across his yard to his house, or moved slowly about his garden, little Fergus by his side, and Mary presiding over a scene of neatness and plenty within, it was thought that there was not a happier family within five miles of the Winding Pond. In fact, George used to say he believed that he had got on in the world better without his legs than he should have done with them.

This Winding Pond was a long, irregular sheet of water, winding around high wooded promontories and into dark valleys ; its shores indented with bays, and its surface spotted with picturesque islands. It was in the midst of a grand amphitheatre of mountain and forest scenery, from among which the little groups of farm-buildings peeped out here and there in the openings. At the distance of a few miles the towering crags of the mountains frowned upon the whole. In the winter season—the period at which this story commences—the pond, throughout the whole of its irregular extension, was white ; the forests, chiefly evergreen, were dark ; and the mountain summits gray.

There was one summit which towered higher than the

Old Hoaryhead.	The firs and pines.	His unchanging aspect.
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rest—old Hoaryhead, as the settlers called it. For two thirds of the way up the side the acclivity was steep, covered with dark firs and pines, which looked as if they were elbowing one another in order to keep their precarious footing. Above them there towered a lofty peak of ragged rocks, which it made you dizzy to look at. The top was smooth and flat, though, on looking a second time, you could perceive something like bristles there—slender, fine, almost invisible in the distance. They were the bare and bleached stems of a few tall pines, which the fire had killed, but which the wind had left standing here and there on the summit. How a forest fire could reach such an elevation might surprise one at first, but the mountain sloped gradually away on the side opposite the pond, along the ridge of a mountain chain, which extended far back into the interior, until it was lost among the other elevations which filled the whole country.

Old Hoaryhead derived his venerable name from the unchangeable hue of the vast masses of gray granite which formed his brow. Whatever might be the hue of the landscape below, whether the luxuriant green of summer, the bright browns of autumn, or white with the vast accumulation of wintry snows, old Hoaryhead was always gray. The few plants which hung in bright festoons from its crevices in summer were invisible below, and in winter the snow could not effect a lodgment. Viewed from the valley, it seemed to be looking out above the region of commotion and storms; and calmness and peace, almost directly visible, appeared to be reposing on its summit. But this was an illusion. There is always an illusion in looking upon what is above us. Old Hoaryhead's rocky declivities were swept all winter with almost perpetual gales. Storms and hurricanes concentrated all their fury upon him. They poured upon his brow their stores of rain, and

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Proposal to send Fergus across the pond.

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hail, and snow, but he shook all off, and scattered them far down into the valleys ; and then, when the wintry storm was over, and the clouds broke away, and the whole country was covered with its mantle of dazzling white, old Hoary-head came out of the conflict unchanged, the same slender bristles relieved against the sky, the same gray rocks, and the same placid expression of awful desolation and solitude.

But Fergus is our hero, not old Hoaryhead, and we must go back to him. The question was whether it was safe for him to attempt to cross the pond for a physician. They looked out of the window, and observed that the storm, though not yet very violent, was fast increasing, and but an hour or two of daylight remained.

"How deep is the snow?" said George.

"Oh, it is ankle deep and more, already."

"And I suppose it is blown away from the yard. It must be deeper still on the pond."

The image of her son struggling through the snow on the pond at dark here rose to the mother's imagination, and she at once decided that Fergus must not go. George was balancing in his mind the alternative.

"We have got to choose between two dangers," said he ; "Benny's in his cradle, sick, without a doctor, and Fergus's on the pond in the snow. It is hard to choose. Let us go and look at Benny."

George here let himself down from his seat, walked across the shop, and followed his wife out into the yard. He *kneed* his way through the deepest parts of the snow, and looked at the clouds, or rather toward the clouds, for the atmosphere was so full of falling snow that the clouds could not be seen. The little blue vane which he had put up on his corn-barn pointed to the northeast, and indicated the quarter which, in that season and climate, seems to be

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George goes into the house.Benny sick in the cradle.

---

filled with vast magazines of wind and snow. George observed all these things as he passed, and then followed Mary into the house.

The house was not the rude log hut which we mentioned as their first habitation. That was still standing, but it was converted into an out-house, and formed one side of the sheltered area of the yard. The present dwelling was a comfortable house with two rooms. The door opened immediately into the principal one. It was a farmer's kitchen, spacious, and exhibiting in all its interior the aspect of rustic comfort and plenty.

On one side of the great fire-place was a little cradle, with Fergus by its side rocking it. He had been stationed there by his mother while she went across to the shop. On the other side of the fire was a little heap of corn-cobs, which Benny had been trying to build a house with an hour or two before; but it was hard work, and yielding to his weakness and giddiness, he laid his head down upon his cricket to rest, when his mother took him up and put him in his cradle.

Here he lay, feverish and restless, with that peculiar expression of anxiety upon his countenance which marks so strikingly infantile disease. He opened his eyes languidly upon his father and mother, and then immediately turned his face away, and closed them again.

George gazed into his little patient's face a few minutes, and then felt his pulse and listened to his breathing. He concluded that some disease was making rapid progress, and that the child must have relief, or its life would soon be in danger.

"Fergus," said he, "do you think you could get across the pond to-night, to the doctor's?"

"Oh yes, father," said Fergus, "easily enough."

"But the snow-storm," said his mother.



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Fergus's courage.He goes out into the snow.

---

"Why, mother, I don't care for the snow-storm; the snow is not very deep."

"Suppose you go out and try it. Put on your straps, and go down as far as the apple-tree and see."

Fergus went to a little cupboard in the wall, and took from it a pair of small leather straps, which he proceeded to fasten round his ankles, over his pantaloons, to keep the snow from working up between them and his boots, and clapping his cap upon his head, sallied forth into the snow. His father and mother watched him from the window. He strode pompously through the snow, plowing his way into the deepest drifts he could find, and looking round to the window with a triumphant smile. The smile was returned heartily from George's countenance, and even in Mary's anxiety and fear gave way for a moment to a faint gleam of pleasure.

"He will never be able to get through," said she; "only see how deep the snow is."

"That is a drift," said George: "it is not so deep as that generally."

George hesitated for a few minutes, aware of the danger. He showed Mary that they must take their choice between the danger in the cradle and that of the storm. There was no other way of communicating with the physician, for Mary could not go, and George could not go. Mary proposed sending to a neighbor's, about half a mile distant, to get a man to go; but George said that the road to that neighbor's was more drifted than the other, and it would be quite late before he could get there, and after dark it would be certain destruction to venture out upon the pond.

"I think," concluded he, "we had better let Fergus go; I suppose he will be able to get there without much difficulty, and then, you know, he can ride back with the doctor. At any rate, that seems to be the best we can do. And now

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His mother is extremely perplexed.

Benny in pain.

---

you must not feel anxious about him. You must consider that God sends him, and that he will watch over him."

"God sends him?" said Mary; "how?"

"By making it appear to us necessary to send him. He arranges all those things which compel us to act; and if we really decide as seems best, under all the light he furnishes, the whole responsibility rests with him."

"But I don't think it so clear that we ought to send him. It is a terrible storm, and I think it is increasing."

"Then we must not send him," said George. "We must look at all the circumstances, and exercise our best judgment, and by no means let him go unless we honestly think that it is the best and wisest course."

Mary looked at Benny in the cradle and then out at the storm. She was perplexed. The scale of the alternative was so nearly in equilibrium that she could not decide. She began to feel a little vexed and irritated because she could not decide.

Just then she heard a restless movement in the cradle, accompanied by a low moan. She went hastily to it, and began to rock it. Benny opened his eyes, and when he saw his mother, he put his hand to his head with a tone of supplication. The first language of infancy is that of looks and signs, the second is the language of tones, and then comes articulation. Benny wanted his mother to take away the pain from his head. He thought she might do it of course, as he had often, when he had been at play, felt a sharp pain in his back, and on running to his mother, she had relieved him at once with her hand. It is true that at such times she took a pin away, but Benny did not see the pin, and he knew of no reason why she could not take away one kind of pain as well as another.

Mary did not understand Benny's sign, and he turned away, mourning fretfully at finding his wishes disregarded.

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It is decided to let Fergus go.

A slight misgiving.

He goes.

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The embryo feelings of impatience and irritation mingled for a moment with the little sufferer's sense of pain, but the struggle ended, almost immediately, in feebleness and exhaustion. His moans grew faint, his eyes closed, and he sunk into a restless slumber.

Mary watched him. His starts, his feverish flush, and his anxious expression of countenance, alarmed her, and it was not long before she concluded that it was best, after all, for Fergus to go. Fergus came in, too, with a little slender pole in his hand, which he called his pike-staff, all equipped for the expedition, and looking so full of courage and animation that she gave up her doubts, and consented to send him. She tied his cap down over his face, while George gave him his directions.

"Go slow, Fergus, especially where the snow is deep, so as to husband your strength. And mind and keep to the road when you get upon the pond. I suppose the snow has blown off there, so that you can see it. But if you lose the road, don't go to wandering about to find it again, but keep on. Make a straight track of it, Fergus, right across — straight as an arrow; then you can find the road again, easy enough, when you get to the shore."

This advice alarmed Fergus a little. He had not reflected that the falling snow would prevent his seeing across the pond, and the idea of venturing out of sight of land in such weather was a little appalling.

Still, the thought was not altogether painful. There is a certain dignity in danger which no one is more sensible of than a spirited boy, and Fergus sallied forth the second time with less joyous glee, certainly, upon his countenance, but with a look of calm and elevated satisfaction. George liked the change.

"Well, good-by, Fergus," said George, at length. "Be sure and go on moderately. You will ride back, you know,

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George and Mary watch Fergus as he goes away.

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with the doctor; and then, this evening, after you come back, we will paint your sled."

He thought he said this to encourage and cheer Fergus; but the truth was, he could not help feeling some anxiety himself; and to look forward, even in imagination, to the time when it would be over, gave his own heart relief. Mary went to the door with Fergus, adjusted his cap and coat for the last time, and put three or four nut-cakes, folded up in brown paper, into his pocket. She then kissed his fair cheek with a feeling that it was very probably for the last time, and opened the door to let him go. A rude blast of wind and snow rushed in upon her so furiously that she closed the door again and went to the window.

George stood at the window too, looking out at one of the lower panes. They watched Fergus as he waded along, pike-staff in hand. He went slowly on till he passed out of the yard and approached the apple-tree, where he was to turn off into the road, out of his parents' sight. Here he turned round, waved his pike-staff with a parting smile, and then disappeared. George turned away in silence to the cradle, and began gently to rock it, saying to himself, "How possible it is that we shall never see him smile again!" Mary went away into the other room, and knelt at the bedside, and prayed that, as they had now done what really seemed to them best, God would take the result into his own hands, and give them hearts of quiet submission to his will. She pressed her handkerchief upon her eyes with both her hands as her head reclined upon them, but the gushing tears would come while she offered the petition.

But we will follow Fergus. His road led him down into a little valley, in which it crossed a brook, where he had played in the summer days many an afternoon. He reached the brook without much difficulty, and as the wind had blown the snow almost entirely off the bridge, he walked

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Account of Fergus's progress.He gets into a deep drift.

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over it freely, striking his pike-staff upon the planks, and looking with a kind of satisfaction at his clothes, whitened with the snow higher than his knees. He looked over the railing of the bridge, and was surprised to see how entirely the brook had disappeared. It had been frozen over, and was completely covered with snow; and even the bed of the stream was so filled in with drifts, that all indications of a brook were entirely gone. Still, when he listened, he could hear a low gurgling, as if under ground.

Fergus did not stop long at the bridge; the wind and falling snow drove him on. His road here turned down the valley, but at the turn a large drift, which was too deep for him, extended across the road. He waded into it as far as he could, and then thrust his pike-staff down into it, on before. It was almost over his head, and the snow was falling so thick around him, and blew with such violence into his face and eyes, that he could not see. He sank down on the soft bed beneath him a moment to rest, turning his back toward the wind.

"I wonder," said he to himself, "what makes it always blow the hardest just as I am in the middle of the deepest drifts. I'll keep still till it is tired."

As he sat, or, rather, reclined thus, almost buried in the drift, his face was turned toward the side of the road, and he saw that along on the other side of the fence was a sort of an eddy where the snow had blown almost entirely away. He could see with difficulty, for the air was thick, and his eyelids were frosted over. He perceived, however, by the little tufts of grass, that the ground was barely covered there, near the fence. So, after resting a moment, and letting his face get warm by keeping it sheltered from the wind, he plowed his way out of the drift, climbed over the fence, and walked along under its lee.

It was an open rail fence, and Fergus could not under-

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 His walk through the woods.

The shore of the pond.

Something dark.

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stand how it could have so much effect in sheltering the ground beyond it; but wiser philosophers than Fergus have been puzzled in attempting to account for the distribution of the drifts in a snow-storm. He walked along quite easily till he came to the woods, where the fence turned off in another direction, and then he came into the road again.

The woods continued uninterrupted down to the pond, and consequently, for the rest of the way, the wind ceased, and the surface of the snow was level. It was pretty deep, but then it was light, and Fergus broke his way in it without much difficulty, though he had to proceed slowly. He, in fact, enjoyed his walk through the woods. The calmness of the air, and the gentleness with which the snow fell, led him, as it has often done more experienced travelers, to imagine that the violence of the storm was abating. The air actually felt mild and bland to his cheek, and Fergus thought his troubles were over. The noise of the blast still sweeping heavily along the tops of the trees might have undeceived him, but Fergus attended only to the pleasanter indications that were near.

After walking thus a quarter of a mile through the woods, he came out upon the shore of the pond, at the landing, where he emerged suddenly into a tempest of wind, and storm, and driving snow. A great drift lay in his way. He struggled into it, but it was too deep for him to get through, and the snow whirled around him and drove into his face so that he could not see nor scarcely breathe. He turned his back to it again, and paused in the snow to rest.

His eyes fell on a dark object down by the shore of the pond. Now any dark object always attracts the footsteps of a traveler when forcing his way through deep snows. It seems to belong to the solid ground, and promises an

Fergus's reflections.

He goes forth upon the pond.

His arrival.



FERGUS IN THE SNOW-STORM.

easier path by the side of it. Fergus turned in that direction and soon reached it. It was the edge of a boat—one in which he had frequently crossed in the summer, and which had been hauled up there, frozen in, and almost buried. Fergus could not help wishing it was a summer evening, with green fields, and blue sky, and a soft breeze among the leaves, so that he might

launch the boat and paddle himself to the other shore.

He paused thus for a moment to contrast the summer with the winter scene, and then turned his face toward the smooth and level surface of the pond before him. The air was so full of driving snow that he could see but a very little way, but then some traces of the road across the ice were visible, and he pushed on. The snow was level upon the pond, as it had been in the woods, but it was more consolidated, and his progress through it was more laborious. The wind, too, which came roaring down from old Hoary-head, in the northeast, over the broad, open surface of the pond, made it very hard for him to struggle on. He succeeded, however, at length, in fairly gaining the opposite shore, without actually losing his track, and then, after a short walk in a sheltered valley, he turned out of the road into the doctor's yard, and waded up to his door.

And now, since he is safely there, we will return to George and Mary. George went back to his shop to finish

George and Mary.

Benny in his cradle.

Mary's great anxiety.

his work, promising to return again then, and take care of Benny while Mary prepared supper. He accordingly came in again after half an hour, looking up anxiously, as he crossed the yard, at the signs of increasing violence in the storm. As he entered, Mary was rocking Benny, and he came and took her place. He had made himself a rocking-chair expressly for the purpose of rocking Benny. It was like any ordinary chair except in height, the seat being only about eight inches from the floor, to accommodate it to his shortened stature. He drew this chair up to the side of the cradle.

"Benny," said he, looking into the cradle, and holding out his hands to the little sufferer, "Benny, want to come and rock with father?"

Benny made an effort to reach out his hands, but from weakness they dropped back again at his side. George took him up gently, and, laying the child's face upon his shoulder, murmured words of sympathy and condolence in his ear.

Mary went to the window.

"Oh my! George," said she, "what a storm! Poor Fergus! he *never* will get across the pond. How could we let him go?"

"We did the best we could, Mary, and now you must not make yourself and me anxious and unhappy about it."

"Why, how can I help feeling anxious?" said she; "my poor boy out on a lone road, in such a storm as this, and night coming on!"

"We can help feeling anxious in a measure," replied George; "we can try to think of something else; and if an anxious thought comes into your mind, don't speak it out: speaking it out makes it stronger. The child is in God's hands, and we have now nothing to do for him."

Mary could not reply to this, and she went about her



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Submission.Mary makes Fergus a turn-over.

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work preparing supper. But her mind was ill at ease. She could not deny George's position that their boy was entirely out of their hands, and that God, by making it plainly their duty to send him, at least as it appeared to them, had taken the responsibility of his safety into his own hands; but yet, after all, her heart was not submissive. She could not let him go, and feel that she had no more to do but to await submissively the decision of another. George too felt an instinctive parental solicitude, which made him follow in imagination every step of Fergus's way; but his heart was subdued and submissive to the will of God in regard to the result, so that he was calm and peaceful in spirit, though the swelling emotions of his heart repeatedly filled his eyes. He hummed in Benny's ear, in words too imperfectly articulated to be heard, the good old hymn,

"Upward I lift mine eyes,  
From God is all my aid."

And they who know by experience what it is really to resign every thing into God's hands in an hour of serious danger or trouble, will not think it strange that he spent half an hour in a state of very pure and heartfelt enjoyment.

In the mean time Mary was busy in her preparations for supper, and particularly in making a little apple turn-over for Fergus "against he came back." An apple turn-over was Fergus's highest idea of luxury, and Mary, by her interest in making it, got over another half hour very well. The time, however, soon arrived when she began to listen for the doctor's sleigh-bells. She began to listen for them a full quarter of an hour before they could have been reasonably expected, but this quarter of an hour glided away very soon, and the daylight began sensibly to decline. She left her work repeatedly to go to the window and look out

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Mary becomes impatient.

Submission impossible.

George.

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anxiously. At last she asked George if it was not time for them to come.

"Why no," said George, hesitating; "I should hardly expect them yet."

"It is two hours and more already, and it is growing dark." Mary brought her face close to the glass, shading her eyes from the light in the room by putting her hands upon each side of them, and straining her sight to look down the road; but the snow which filled the air, and drove against the window, and trickled down on the outside, prevented her seeing much. "I do not believe it is possible for the poor little fellow to get across the pond in such a night as this."

"Well, Mary, we have nothing to do but to wait quietly for the end now. There is nothing we can do, and it is wrong to be restless and anxious about it."

"Oh dear," said Mary, sitting down and gazing into the fire with a look of great distress, "how sorry I am we let him go! I might have gone; and now he will perish in the snow, and I shall never have another moment's peace as long as I live."

"But consider, Mary," said George, "we have done the best we could; and he is in God's hands. You are not willing to leave him there."

"Oh, George," said she, "it is too dreadful." She rose, and walked back and forth across the room with a hurried and restless step.

The truth was, that the strong impulses of maternal anxiety had gained an entire triumph over her feelings of Christian resignation to the divine will. George had left the case in the hands of God, and was quietly awaiting the result; not coldly and with unconcern, for his heart was full of the deepest and tenderest interest in the fate of his little son; but while his affections and sympathies were all

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Mental tumult and agitation.George finds it easy to be submissive.

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deeply interested in the case, his *will* stood aside, and entered into no contest with God in respect to the issue. Mary, however, could not give up the case to God. Her mind and will struggled for the control of it, and as she was utterly without power, her soul was in a state of indescribable tumult and agitation. Nothing makes such commotion in the soul as a will struggling for dominion while yet it is powerless. It rages like a maniac, chained, but unsubdued.

Two reasons made the duty of submission, in this case, far more easy for George than for Mary. First, he was not the *mother*. There was a semi-animal instinct of parental love in her bosom, which was altogether weaker in his. Then, again, from a constitutional difference in their habits of mind, he was accustomed to see more of the bright side, and she more of the dark. His natural associations of thought were cheerful, Mary's were sad; so that, when any rude blast of unusual fury shook the windows, it was followed in Mary's mind by the idea of Fergus sinking under it in the snow, while to George it suggested the probability that the wind itself might be a guide to Fergus to the points of the compass if he should get lost, or that it would blow off the snow from the ice, or some other encouraging idea. Thus submission was a far more easy duty to George than to Mary; still, it was no less a *duty* to both.

The tumult in Mary's mind increased as the next hour passed away without bringing any tidings of her boy. Her agitation and her sufferings were increased, too, by the conviction that her feelings were wrong, and that her plain unwillingness to submit to the decision of God was entirely inconsistent with her Christian vows. But to feel right is a very different thing from struggling against feeling wrong. She saw clearly how unreasonable it was for her to be unwilling that God should decide, and how foolish it was, even

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Mary finds it absolutely impossible.

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in heart, to attempt to resist him ; then, by a kind of desperate struggle, she would resolve to give up the contest, and resign the case entirely into God's hands ; but it was of little avail. She found that the root of insubmission lay too deep. Resolutions and determinations, somehow or other, did not reach it. After the most energetic exercise of the will to feel right which seemed possible, she would find, in a few minutes, her heart rising again as rebellious as before. Then would succeed a feeling of despair at the hopelessness of her efforts ; then self-reproach for this sinful rising against God ; then the suggestion that she could not be to blame for what it was plain she could not conquer ; then the instinctive conviction of the moral sense that such a feeling of rebellion against God, in one to whom God had always been so kind and faithful a protector, was guilty in the extreme, whether she could help it or not, and that the fruitlessness of her attempts to control it only showed how deeply it was seated. Thus was her soul tossed to and fro by a tempest of contending emotions.

In the mean time Benny had been returned to his cradle, and he gradually sank into a kind of lethargy. George sat in his low chair by the corner, rocking the cradle, and reading a tract by the light of the fire. The tea-kettle hummed a monotonous song close before the fire, and by the side of it was a plate, the contents of which were covered and concealed by a bowl reversed over it. It was Fergus's turn-over.

An hour more passed away. It was after nine o'clock. Mary declared she could bear the anxiety and suspense no longer, and that she would go out herself and see what had become of her boy. George tried to dissuade her, but with little success. He represented to her that she could do nothing on such a night, in such a wild, unfrequented road—that she could not see the drifts, or even find her way.

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Mary resolves to go in search of Fergus.

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"I know it is bad," said she, "but poor Fergus must be perishing in this storm, and I *can not* stay here."

"No," said George, "we can't be sure of that, by any means. Perhaps the doctor kept him there to wait till morning—or perhaps he was not at home—or perhaps some one may have met with Fergus on the way, and persuaded him to go home with him till the storm is over. At any rate, it will do no good for you to go out. Then, besides," said he, "look at poor Benny there; if any thing happens to you, what will become of him?"

Mary saw the hopelessness of any efforts she could make, but a feeling which she could not resist seemed to urge her on in her preparations, though she was evidently undecided and perplexed. Twice she took off her bonnet and laid it down, and then, after pacing back and forth across the room, took it again, saying, "*I must go.*" At length she opened the door and went out, though she assured George that she was only going a few steps down the road.

The snow was so drifted in the yard that it lay in great heaps and ridges, but she contrived to work her way slowly along in the shallow places between them. The wind blew the snow, however, so violently into her face, that she was almost blinded, and sometimes had to turn round to get breath. She at length made her way down the yard, and out to the turn of the road. She noticed the traces of Fergus's footsteps thus far, but here a high-crested ridge ran obliquely across the road, in which all traces of his path had been buried up, and which effectually prevented her from making any farther progress. She stood here a moment in despair. She called, *Fergus!* with all the strength of voice she could raise, and then paused, holding her breath, to catch a reply. But it was in vain to attempt to listen. The sweeping sound of the snow flying around her, the flapping of her cloak, and, above all, the awful howling of the

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She is driven back by the storm.Fergus arrives at the doctor's.

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wind among the bare branches and tops of the forest trees, would have been more than sufficient to have drowned the cry of a perishing child, had such a cry been uttered near her; and Mary turned away, pale and almost fainting with anxious fear, and toiled her way back to the house. Her heart was in a state of utter rebellion against the supremacy of God.

There is a point, both in mental and bodily suffering, where the power of endurance itself seems at length to be exhausted, and the words that arise are, "*I can not bear this any longer.*" They who watch with the sick observe this point as the patient passes it in the progress of pain—the succumbing and sinking of the spirit, when the load becomes at last *intolerable*. Mary was very near this point as she returned to the house.

But we must go back to Fergus. We left him going up safely to the door of the snug little farm-house where the doctor lived. It was in a narrow glen, sheltered toward the north by high cliffs. A noisy stream gurgled along this glen at a small distance from the house, forming in summer a beautiful brook, but now nearly concealed by ice and snow. When Fergus reached the house, he saw that it appeared deserted. The snow lay piled up about the doors and windows, and he saw no track.

"What!" said he to himself, "nobody at home?" Then, in a moment, casting his eye up, he saw a slight smoke blowing off from the chimney-top. "Ah yes," said he, "I thought Mother Conny must be there, at least."

He waded through the yard, and went round into a shed which was open toward the south, and was, of course, almost entirely sheltered from the storm. Here he could breathe freely. He brushed and beat the snow off from his clothes, and took off his cap and shook it. His fingers and feet ached with the cold, but he thought that these prepara-

Fergus goes in at the back door.

Mother Conny.

tions were necessary, for Mother Conny's ideas of tidiness seemed to grow more rigid as she grew old, and she was not a particularly gentle hostess when displeased.

Fergus then ascended one or two steps which led from the shed into a small back room attached to the kitchen. It contained various tools and utensils, arranged in neat order around it, and a spinning-wheel in one corner. The room had a chilly and comfortless expression, which was increased by the sound of the wind and snow driving against the window. Fergus walked across it, and came to a door leading into the kitchen. There was no latch or handle visible, but in place of them a leather string, with a knot at the end of it, protruding through a gimlet hole. Fergus pulled this string; it raised the wooden latch on the inside; the door opened, and he entered.

In a large, oldfashioned elbow-chair by the side of the



FERGUS AT THE DOCTOR'S

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Conversation with Mother Conny.Lora gives Fergus a chair.

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fire sat Mother Conny, knitting. Her crutches were leaning up against the chimney by her side. A plain round table was standing in the middle of the room, with cups and plates upon it, which a beautiful little blue-eyed girl was arranging. The girl looked at Fergus when he came in, and smiled.

"Why, Fergus, child!" cried out the old lady, in rather a severe voice, "is it you? Well, you are in a fine case, I declare. Caught out here, a mile and more from home, in this storm! Run away, I dare say, and now your poor mother is half crazy. Well," said she to herself, "so it always is with children. I only wish my son was not like all the rest of 'em."

"Why, mother," said Fergus, "the snow-birds are out to-day, and why should not I be? I am stouter than a snow-bird."

"A snow-bird!" said the old lady, with a look of contempt; and then, appearing not to have any thing else to say, went on knitting as fast as she could.

Fergus turned round to look for little Lora again. It seemed he liked *first* childhood better than second—at least he liked its greeting better, though it was only a silent smile. He found that Lora was bringing a chair for him, lifting it laboriously with both hands. He took it as silently as it was offered, and put his aching feet toward the fire.

"I came for your father, Lora, to go and see little Benny; is he at home?"

"At home!" said the old lady; "no, my John is never at home. He is always traveling off among these woods and mountains, night and day. And now he's gone o' horse-back away round old Hoaryhead—and such a storm! I told him it was going to be a terrible blow—I knew by signs—and it's turned out true; for there has not been such a storm since stormy Monday, thirty years ago come next month."



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Talk about the storm.

Fergus's supper.

The pipe.

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"Why, mother," said Fergus, "I don't think it is so very bad. The snow is not so deep as it was in some storms last winter."

"But it is not done yet, child. I tell you there has not been such a storm this thirty years as this is, and is going to be."

Fergus paused a moment, considering his situation. Then rising, he said,

"Well, then, I must go back alone, and the sooner I am on the pond again, the better."

Lora told him he had better wait. She thought her father would be at home before long, and she went to the front room window to see if she could not see him coming; but nothing was visible but driving and drifted snow.

The old lady herself remonstrated against his going, and urged him to stay, and "her John" would carry him over in the morning. The truth was, her asperity was only superficial, and there was a current of real good-will beneath. Fergus, however, said he *must* go back, for his mother would be very anxious about him if he did not return.

"That is true," said the old lady; "and I like you for that. I know how mothers feel. I wish my John would care a little about *his* mother. But, Lora, give him some supper first, and let him go."

Lora brought a bowl of milk from the table to the fire, and putting in two or three spoonfuls of hasty-pudding from a kettle in the corner, gave it to Fergus. He ate it with great satisfaction, and then prepared to go. Mother Conny seemed anxious and agitated. She called for her pipe, put in some tobacco out of a little box which she took from her pocket, and was reaching out into the corner for some hot ashes, when Fergus drew off his mitten and said,

"Let me light it for you, mother."

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Fergus goes back to the pond.It grows dark.

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"Do," said she; "that's a good child; there, that will do; now away as quick as you can, and God bless you.

"And, Fergus," said she, just as he was opening the door to go out, "if you see any snow-birds, don't throw any sticks or stones at 'em: it's unlucky; and it's hard to bear bad luck such a night as this. Chirrup to 'em kindly, and you'll get home all the safer for it."

Lora watched Fergus as long as his dim form could be seen in the snow, and then, with feelings of real solicitude and pity, sat down in her little rocking-chair, and began to rock away her troubles. Her attention was soon diverted, and her mind absorbed in a new object of interest—that of watching a burning brand nearly consumed in the middle, to see how many she could count before the ends would fall. And yet it must be confessed that she often thought of Fergus during the evening, and asked her grandmother whether she thought he would get home.

Fergus succeeded in making his way back to the pond without much difficulty. The wind was now behind him; and not only was its direction more favorable, but its force upon him was now diminished by his own motion, as it was before increased; so that between the coming and the going, there was, in respect to its effect on him, a difference in the violence of the storm of twice his own velocity. This created an impression upon his mind that the storm was abating; at any rate, he went on more easily, and he accordingly ventured out upon the pond with less misgiving than he had felt before. Still, it was growing dark, and he found that his tracks were nearly obliterated. The snow was deeper too, and falling fast; and it was not long before he lost sight of his track. He went on a few steps, hoping that he should come upon it again, but it did not appear.

He recollected his father's directions not to wander about in search of it, but to make a straight track directly across,

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The breathing-hole.Mother Conny's explanation of the phenomenon.

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and this he accordingly attempted to do, looking round behind him every moment, to see, from the track behind, that his course was directly onward. Daylight faded away very fast, and he could see only a few paces behind him, but still he went on in this way for perhaps half a mile, when he began to think he ought to be approaching the shore. At last he stopped suddenly at a large dark spot dimly visible through the falling snow, at a small distance before him. It was a *breathing-hole*.

Oh, those breathing-holes, how many breaths they have stopped! The ponds, in the first setting in of winter, freeze uniformly, so that the whole surface is covered with the glassy ice; but as the winter advances, openings gradually appear in particular places, which go by the name of breathing-holes. In the minds of the rustic philosophers around, they are associated with the idea of certain windy communications with gloomy caverns and deep recesses beneath the pond, in which great rumbling bubbles of deadly airs and gases were continually passing to and fro. One night when Fergus and several other children had been listening to a tale from Mother Conny about a man and his wife, and two lovely little children, driving, in a dark night, directly into one, Fergus asked her what made those breathing-holes.

"What makes 'em, child?" said she; "why, a pond must have breath as well as a creatur! Freeze it all over tight and solid, and how do you suppose it could live? It must find vent somewhere."

"Suppose it *couldn't* find vent, mother, what would happen then?" said Fergus.

"Why, it *would* find vent somewhere, I tell ye, child. When there comes on a real stinging night, that closes up the breathing-holes, you'll hear the cracks running and *ringing* over the ice from Hoaryhead away down to the outlet."

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*Fergus makes a great turn around the breathing-hole.*

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"I never heard them, I believe, mother," said Fergus.

"Then you don't lie awake o' nights as much as I do, which I think is very likely."

But let us return to our story.

Fergus fell back a step or two, with his eyes fixed upon the opening before him. The water looked dark and deep, and little waves were driving rapidly across it.

He did not know which way to turn. It was evident that he had wandered far from the road, but whether he was on the right or on the left of it he did not know, and of course could not tell whether he was to turn to the right hand or the left in order to regain his course. He concluded, after a moment's thought, that he had better go around the hole, and then go on beyond it as nearly as possible in the same direction as before.

He accordingly made a great sweep, so as to avoid the thin ice near the edges of the hole, until he supposed that he had reached the opposite side, and then went on, longing to see the shore. The dead level of the ice seemed to weary his eyes; and he could see for only so short a distance before him, that he began to think he might wander about all night upon the ice without finding the land.

But at length there suddenly appeared full before him, yet dimly seen through the falling snow, the forms of half a dozen dark evergreens. Fergus was overjoyed. The very sight of objects that broke the dreary monotony of the dead level which he had been passing over seemed to relieve him. He thought his troubles were all over, for he should now soon regain his road, and then he could not be very far from home.

He went off from the ice and ascended the shore. It seemed to be open ground, with a few scattered clumps of trees near the pond, but as it was now quite dark, and the whole scene was disguised by the vast masses of snow

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The shore.

Fergus is lost.

His tinder-box.

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under which it was buried, Fergus could not tell where he was, and of course could not tell which way to turn along the shore. He then thought he would walk up on the land a little way, and see if he could not find something which would enable him to recognize the place. He got along without much difficulty, under the shelter of the trees. The ground was rough, and seemed to be pasture-land, and was in many places encumbered with logs, and bushes, and fallen trees. Fergus toiled along among these until he was completely bewildered and lost, and could not even find his way back to the pond again. He was not cold, for the exercise kept him warm; but he was discouraged and exhausted, and tears came into his eyes in spite of all his efforts to repress them. He sank down in the soft snow, under the lee of an old brush fence, which sheltered him a little from the wind.

Here, impelled by the universal instinct of children in trouble, he called aloud three or four times with all his strength, "*Fa-ther*," "*Fa-ther*," and then said to himself, "It's no use. Father can't hear me, and if he could hear me he could not come."

As he said this, he was half sitting, half lying in the snow close under the fence, and felt something hard in his pocket as his weight pressed upon it. He put his hand to it, and found it was a little tinder-box which his father had made for him, and which he often carried in his pocket, as striking fire with it was a never-ending amusement.

"Ah!" said he, "my tinder-box. Now, if I could only strike fire here; but it snows so fast it will spoil my tinder. I'll try, at any rate."

He thought he would get his pile of fuel all ready first, so that in case his match took fire, he should not lose it for want of something to kindle up at once; so he began to break off the branches from the old brush fence, which were

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Fergus attempts to kindle a fire.His precautions.

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dry and brittle, and to heap them up, first making a place for his fire by trampling down and pushing away the snow. After he had piled up a pretty good heap of this combustible brushwood, he took out his tinder-box, and the little parcel of nut-cakes, from his pocket. He took off the brown paper in which the cakes were enveloped, and rolled it up so as to make a sort of slow match of it. He thought, if he could get this on fire, it would be less likely to be blown out by the wind than one of his brimstone matches, in his attempting to communicate the flame to the brushwood.

Fergus was pretty well skilled in kindling a fire in the woods in a windy day, and was familiar with all the necessary precautions. He turned toward the fence, kneeled down in the snow, and bent his head over, and spread the lappels of his great-coat at the sides, so as to inclose and shelter completely the space beneath him. On opening his tinder-box, he found he had but three matches. He struck fire without any difficulty, ignited a match, and then lighted the paper; but, in attempting to convey the paper to the brushwood, the violence of the wind extinguished it in a moment.

He tried again with his second match, though this time he waited until the wind lulled, and by thus taking advantage of a momentary calm, he succeeded in getting the blazing paper under a corner of his pile of fuel, and in a few minutes had the pleasure of seeing a bright crackling flame rise several inches up through the dry twigs. The inexperienced reader will perhaps imagine that the crisis was now passed, but it was not so; for it is nearly as difficult to get a pile of light dry brush fairly burning, as it is, when it is fairly burning, to put it out. Fergus gazed at the flame a moment with delight, but it soon grew dim, and presently died all away again, leaving a little hollow in the heap, with the glowing ends of twigs all around it, point-

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*After several failures he finally succeeds.*

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ing inward. Fergus hastened to push these together again, but all his efforts only hastened the extinguishment of the fire.

He gazed on the blackened branches a minute or two, and then said to himself,

“Only one match more. Now I must be careful.” So he began to look around him, to do what, in fact, he ought to have done at first, that is, procure a supply of birch bark, that universal foster-father of forest fires. He rambled around for some time, taking care not to go out of sight of his encampment, and stripped off from trees and logs a large quantity of the bark. He put a part of this in and under his pile of fuel, and the rest he laid in a little heap near the fence, so that he could shelter it by leaning over it, as before, and have the tinder-box close to it when he struck fire. With these precautions his success was almost sure. He lighted his match, and communicated the flame without much difficulty to the little heap of birch bark near, sheltering it with his great-coat until it was well on fire; then he transferred one blazing piece after another to his pile of brushwood. The flame from the birch bark was so powerful that the wind did not extinguish it. He pulled off other branches and bushes from the fence, and heaped them upon the fire, and piled on also small, half-decayed stumps and logs, which he pulled up around from under the snow. He dragged out tall bushes from the fence, and laid the tops down upon the fire, which blazed and crackled up through them into the air. Then, as the tops were gradually burned off, he pulled out the stems below and laid them on again, and thus, in half an hour, he had a solid fire, with a substantial bed of coals, and large, burning brands in the centre, and a broad space trampled down all round it. Fergus then got some green branches of hemlock, and spread them down between the fire and the fence, and sat

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Fergus establishes himself comfortably by his fire.

A cry.

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down upon them, putting his feet out toward his fire, resting his heels upon a piece of dry wood which he laid down for this purpose upon the snow. His back was against the fence, which sheltered him from the wind. He then took up his nut-cakes, which he had laid down by his side when he took off their paper wrapper, shook off the snow by which they were pretty well covered, and began to eat them, saying to himself, "All I wish now is that my poor mother only knew what a comfortable place I have got."

Fergus sat a short time in silence, enjoying his rest, and the bright, cheerful influence of the fire, when he thought he heard a cry. He listened. The wind roared so loud through the tops of the trees that he could scarcely hear any other sound, but he was soon satisfied that he heard at short intervals a man's voice calling for help. He started up, and shouted as loud as he could in reply, turning his head in the direction of the sound, and then immediately clambered over the brush fence, and began toiling through the snow in the direction from which the sound proceeded. His course led him through an opening in the woods from which the snow had blown away considerably, so that he got across pretty easily. He came then upon the brink of a deep ravine, and the voice seemed pretty near, but upon the other side.

"Help! Help!" said the voice.

"Hal—lo," cried Fergus.

"Can—you—come—and—help—us?" cried out the voice again.

"Yes," said Fergus; "wait a moment; I will try to come over."

Fergus ran down into the ravine, for the snow had blown almost entirely off the declivity; but it had drifted in very deep at the bottom, so that he found it very hard to get through. However, he struggled up the other side, and at



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Traveler lost in the snow.Conversation.

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the top he met a man wading toward him, with a thick wadded wrapper, a fur cap, a fur tippet round his neck, and a horsewhip in his hands. The man seemed utterly astonished to see such a child before him.

"Why, my boy," said he, "where do you come from? Is there a house near here?"

"No, sir," said Fergus, "there is no house, but I have got a noble great fire out here a little way."

There was something so calm, and innocent, and cheerful in Fergus's look and tone, and so contrasted with the traveler's intense anxiety and terror, that he could scarcely believe that the fair form before him was not a vision.

"No house near here," said he, with astonishment, "and yet a fire! Why, how is it possible that you can be out here such a night as this?"

"Why, I lost my way coming across the pond, and so I had to build a fire with my little tinder-box."

The traveler stared at the boy an instant, and then turned round suddenly, saying, "I must not stop here; my poor wife is perishing."

"Your wife, sir? Where is she?"

"Just out here in the road—come!"

"Is the road near here?" thought Fergus; "I did not know I was near the road;" and he followed the traveler back. In a minute they came out of the woods near a board fence, and went through a gap in it into the road. The road itself was almost entirely filled up by the snow for a long distance, the wind having blown right across it, and it lay in a ridgy slope from the top of the fence on one side to the middle of it on the other. In the midst of this was a dark mass, which, as they approached it, Fergus saw was a horse and sleigh, half buried. The horse was standing still, nearly exhausted, and the buffalo skins in the sleigh were completely whitened with the falling snow.

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The traveler's wife.She is stupified with the cold.

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Fergus came up with the traveler to the sleigh, and found that there was a lady sitting in it. The traveler spoke to her, and told her that there was a fire a short distance off the road, and that she must try to walk to it; but she was drowsy and stupid, and did not wish to move. The traveler took hold of her to raise her up, and spoke in a very decided tone, and she accordingly rose, shook the snow off her cloak, and prepared to step out into the road. The gentleman opened her cloak and took from her a little child which she had been carrying, and then told her to walk along immediately after him. Fergus went before, following the track he had made through the snow in coming from the fire.

The lady's strength and spirits revived by the exercise, and in a short time they were all comfortably established by the fire. They collected more wood, and spread down



THE FIRE IN THE WOODS.

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Preparations for the night.

The storm is over.

Morning.

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a large number of hemlock branches, and then Fergus and the traveler went back to the sleigh. They unharnessed the horse, and put all the buffalo skins and blankets which were in the sleigh upon his back, and Fergus led him along toward the fire. The traveler himself followed, with a hatchet, and a basket of bread and cheese, which he had in the sleigh-box, and thus they returned to the fire. They fixed up some stakes in the brush fence and in the snow, and spread their buffalos over them so as to make quite a comfortable shelter, and by the time they had got fairly established in their encampment the night was half gone. Fergus himself was soon curled up in a corner, sound asleep, and even the traveler nodded several times as he sat leaning back against the bushes. About three o'clock he got up to replenish the fire, and found, to his great joy, that stars were beginning to appear through the thin clouds

Just before sunrise he awoke Fergus. The sky was clear, and a cold wind was blowing from the northwest. That wind had been at work for two or three hours, packing away all the loose flying flakes into every interstice on the surface of the drifts, so that Fergus found, to his surprise, that the snow would bear his weight in many places where it had drifted hard. Seen by daylight, too, he recognized the place where they were. It was not very far from his father's house, and only quite a short distance from another farm-house on his way. It was agreed, therefore, that he should go in pursuit of help, as he could get along so much more easily upon the drifts. When he reached the farmer's, they were just shoveling paths to the great barn, and they promised to go immediately with teams to release the travelers. Fergus went on toward his own home; and just at sunrise, when Mary had come out for the twentieth time to strain her eyes once more down the road which led to the pond, she was thrown into an ecstasy of delight at

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Benny convalescent.Nature of true submission.

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hearing his well-known shout behind her, on another road, close at hand.

That evening, when George came in from his work-shop, he found little Bennie smiling in his cradle. He took him up, and gave him Fergus's tinder-box to play with. Mary was preparing supper. Fergus was in the shop, making more matches. Presently Mary came up to George, and said, in a subdued voice,

"Husband, I believe I was very wrong last night. I ought to have had more faith."

"Not more faith," said George, "but more submission."

"Why—I mean I ought to have believed that God would have taken care of our dear boy, as you did."

"No," said he, "I had no reason to believe that God would save his life, and I did not, in fact, really think we should ever see him again."

"How could you be so quiet and calm, then?"

"I felt willing that God should do as he pleased."

There was a pause. Mary had imagined that it was her duty to have believed all the time that Fergus was in no danger, but George explained to her again that true submission to the divine will will make us easy, not by creating a delusion that the objects we love are certainly *safe*, but making us willing to leave them entirely in God's hands when *we know they are in danger*.

"But that is very hard," said Mary.

"It depends on circumstances."

"What circumstances?" said Mary.

"It is hard if the heart is wrong, but if the heart is really right toward God, it is very easy."

Love.

Various objects of affection.

Loving and being beloved.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SELF-CONVICTED MOTHER.

THE human heart must have something to love—at least so poets and sentimental philosophers have told us a thousand times. It must have some objects of interest and affection, though in real life these are of all grades, from the Laura of Petrarch down to the spider of the Bicêtre, or the Philadelphia prisoner's pet mouse! This is, perhaps, going somewhat too low in the scale for serious description, and yet the spider or the mouse affords a very serious addition to happiness, or perhaps, rather, a very important alleviation of misery, in a solitary convict's cell.

There is, however, a stronger passion still than this in the human soul, and which arises also out of its sympathetic relations to others. It is essentially different from love, though, by a loose use of language, it is often included in it—the desire of being loved in return. Love itself, strictly speaking, would be gratified by the presence or by the possession of the object. But this does not satisfy us. We wish not only to indulge our love for others, but to know and feel that others cherish love for us. We must be *objects* of affection ourselves, or life is a dreary void. To allude to the prisoner once more: he is strongly attached to his mouse, it is true, but he feels a tenfold greater interest in the *kitten*, which is capable of evincing some regard and affection in return.

This desire of being an object of affection is one of the great attributes of the Deity, though it is one which theo-

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Some account of Hoaryhead.The sides and the summit.

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logians have not named. It is entirely distinct from his benevolence. The latter is his desire for the *welfare* of his creatures on their account, the former is his desire for their *love* on his own ; for the whole aspect in which God is exhibited to us in the Bible shows, so far as we may properly apply any language descriptive of human feelings to his mysterious nature, that it is one of the great sources of the divine beatitude to be the object of reverence, gratitude, and affection to the beings whom his hand has formed.

Hoaryhead, as we have already said, was not a solitary mountain rising from a plain. It was a higher summit swelling up from a sea of hills, crags, chasms, and valleys. In one of these valleys a solitary road threaded its way among the trees up a long ascent—a forest on one side, and a deep valley on the other. In the summer season this was a romantic road. On the right hand was the dense forest, the ground rising gently, though the view in that direction was cut off entirely by the trees and the thick underbrush. On the left, the land descended very rapidly into the deep valley, so that the traveler could look over the tops of the trees, and far down you could hear the low and distant murmuring of a brook tumbling over its rocky bed in the bottom of the glen. Beyond the brook, the land rose again by a sharp acclivity, oaks, maples, firs, and pines clinging to the soil, and out-topping one another up the hill. They grew smaller and less dense, at least in appearance, the higher the eye ascended. Farther up still, clumps of low bushes and bare patches of rock intervened ; and at last the picture was completed and crowned by the towering summit of old Hoaryhead, with his steep and ragged declivities, and bristled brow.

This was a different aspect of Hoaryhead from that which was presented toward Fergus's home across the pond. This

Forest solitudes.

Going to ruin.

A release.

was a nearer view, and it looked toward a different side of the mountain. It was, perhaps, a more imposing scene, for the ragged pile appeared more grand and vast here than from a greater distance in the plain below. Then, besides, the forest solitudes immediately around the observer formed a more appropriate accompaniment to the expression of dread sublimity and grandeur which a near view of the vast pile always gave.

One might have supposed that such solitudes as these were uninhabitable. No. The wild road we have been speaking of led to a dwelling. There was a miserable man, who once had a smoother and more fertile farm near the pond below; but his idleness, improvidence, and vicious habits had gradually alienated it. First he sold parts of it to his neighbors, as occasion occurred when he must have ready cash. Finally, he mortgaged what remained; and at last, when he could pay neither principal nor interest of his debt, he exchanged what was left of his title for a small and solitary lot in this valley, where he built a log house, and removed his wife and child. But the health and life of the vicious generally waste away as rapidly as their estate; at least it was so with this poor mortgager. He was actually sinking into consumption when he removed into this elevated valley, and after a few months died.

The wife mourned her husband's death most sincerely and bitterly, but yet, somehow or other, a load appeared to be taken off from her, in respect to her condition and prospects, when he sank into the grave. Her fortunes seemed gradually to improve. Little debts were paid off. The house, or rather cabin, situated in its little opening, sheltered by forest hills behind, and with the great valley and old Hoaryhead before, gradually assumed a neater and tidier appearance. Gilbert, her boy, too, was more comfortably clad, and her countenance had less of that fixed expression

Some account of Gilbert.

His coming home.

His sled.

of sadness and anxiety which had marked it for so many years before. Her little log huts—for there were two, one for a house, and the other for a barn—when all was put in order around them, made quite a picturesque appearance, and, as she said, the place was not lonesome, like some places among the mountains, for from the end window, looking down the valley, a part of the pond was in view, which made her feel very near her neighbors. Then, besides, though she did not say so, she often thought, in a stormy night, as she was knitting by the side of the fire, that as there was no danger of an intoxicated husband's coming home, there was nothing in the wide world to fear.

One mild winter afternoon Gilbert was coming along the road. He was a short, stout-built boy, with sandy hair and complexion. He was sauntering very leisurely along, whistling, and was dressed in a coarse homespun frock, with a red cap on his head. His hands were in his pockets. A small rope, tied with many knots, was over one arm, and attached to the other end was a rude sled, which he had himself fashioned, with boards and nails for his materials, and a hammer and an axe for tools. The pathway had not been very well broken out, and the sled-path therefore meandered along between



GILBERT WITH HIS SLED.



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Gilbert sits down on a log to watch a bear.

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and around, and sometimes over, the deep drifts. This road was generally kept well open in the early part of the winter, but as it was very little traveled, it was nearly abandoned when the heavy February storms came on.

It was just at night. The rays of the setting sun brought out splendid masses of light and shadow on old Hoaryhead's declivities, and while Gilbert was looking at them, he saw something black in a small opening on the side of the mountain. There was a smooth pine log at the lower side of the road where he was standing, which had been placed there as a sort of balustrade. The wind had kept it bare, and Gilbert stepped upon it to look at the black object, thinking that it was a bear. It was still. He concluded to sit down upon the log to watch it, to see if it would move. He sat on the log thus for some time, watching the changing shadows of the mountain, and the gradual decline of the golden light in the west. The air was mild and calm, and seemed very clear as he looked toward the sides of Hoaryhead, though misty vapors seemed to be gathering slowly around its summit.

Gilbert lingered here for some time in a dreamy sort of reverie, conscience reproaching him all the time, for he knew that his mother was discharging the evening duties which ought to have devolved on him. Gilbert was doing wrong—very wrong; and yet he was a good boy—that is, as good as boys commonly are whose hearts are yet unchanged.

Unchanged! perhaps some reader may say. "Do you find," it may be asked, "evidences of the need of a change of the heart in respect to such feelings as Gilbert was indulging? Is it wrong to love the beauties of nature, and to linger in such a scene as this to enjoy the emotions of sublimity and beauty?" No, not at all. Gilbert's nature was not wrong in respect to these feelings, but in respect

Gilbert's education.

His character.

He comes into the yard.

to a deficiency in regard to others, which ought, just at this time, to have come into competition with them. There certainly must have been something radically wrong in a heart which was so much more alive to the beauties of a mountain declivity at sunset, and the indolent pleasure of a reverie, than it was to the duty of filial obedience, and the pleasure of alleviating the toils of a lonely mother's life. God had commanded Gilbert, too, to love and obey his mother. He knew this, but cared nothing for it. Like other children, he sometimes obeyed her and sometimes disobeyed; but, like them, whether he obeyed or disobeyed, it was from other considerations. God's command had nothing to do with it, one way or the other. It was not taken into the account at all.

While Gilbert's father lived, he had been treated with alternate indulgence and severity. Since then, his mother had found all her affections so strongly centering in him that she could not bear to exercise over him any great restraint. She loved him as one might suppose a mother would who had nothing else to love, and she tried every possible mode that her ingenuity could devise to win back his affection in return. But he was cold toward her, and often undutiful and disobedient; and yet he was as good as other boys; he acted just as almost all boys will act, where the reins of parental government are held so loosely.

When Gilbert turned up toward the house, he perceived at once that the cow was not in the little yard, where he had left her basking in the sun when he went away, and that the door of the little log barn was shut. "Ah!" said he to himself, "mother has taken care of the cow. I am glad of that—only I suppose I have got to go down to the spring, and bring up a great heavy pail of water."

He turned his eye, as he said this, toward a narrow foot-path, which led down into a deep, wooded glen, where the

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Gilbert's various excuses.

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His mother's indulgence.

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spring was situated which supplied the family with water. He saw his mother just emerging from the copse of trees with the pail of water in her hands. The sight awakened in Gilbert's mind a mingled feeling of pleasure and pain. There was a selfish pleasure at perceiving that his work was done, and yet he could not help feeling a momentary remorse at leaving *his* duties to be thus performed by his mother, in addition to her own. He ran round the corner of the house so as to escape her observation, and waited until she had time to get fairly in, put the water in its place, and lay aside her hood, before he followed.

"Gibby, my dear," said she, "you are very late. You promised me you would come home early if I would let you go."

"Why, mother, it is not late—it is only just sundown."

"Yes, it was sundown a good while ago, and I have had all your work to do."

Gilbert did not reply. He seemed to be very busy untying his shoes.

"Well, it is no matter, Gibby; you will do better next time. To-morrow I shall want you to go down to the Corner with my yarn."

"Why, mother, I don't want to go away down there; and besides, I believe it is going to rain to-morrow. Old Hoary-head has got his storm-cap on."

"Has he? Well, if it rains you can not go. I thought it was very warm. It is thawing all around the spring. How wet your stockings are!"

Gilbert was pulling off his wet stockings, and hanging them upon the sharp angles of the large stones which formed the fire-place. He sat down upon the hearth, which was also formed of a large flat stone, and put his feet out toward the great blazing fire.

"Now, Gibby," said his mother, "you had better just

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Hoaryhead's cap.Gilbert and his mother at their supper.

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slip on your shoes, and go and fetch in your wood before it gets any darker, and then we will have supper."

"Why, mother, it will do as well in the morning. I had rather bring it in in the morning, my feet are so wet and cold."

"Yes, but you know it is going to rain. Hoaryhead has got his cap on, and the wood will be all wet before morning."

"I don't believe it will rain so soon. It is not much of a cap, and it may all blow away."

The mother sighed to think how easily her boy could interpret the indications of their vast barometer either way, as would best serve the purpose of an excuse from duty. She took a small and plain table from the side of the room and placed it before the fire. A brown earthen mug, filled with milk, was standing in the chimney corner. She took this up, and poured the milk into a large bowl of the same material, and then put in two iron spoons, and placed it on the table. She drew up the chair—for there was but one chair in the room—on one side of the table, and Gilbert stood at the other. Part of a loaf of coarse brown bread was upon the table by the side of the bowl. This they "crumbed" into the milk, and together ate their supper.

The blazing fire shed a strong light over the room. The walls consisted of logs, with the interstices closed by clay. There were two small windows at opposite sides, one of which was glazed, and the other was closed with a shutter. The floor was the natural surface of the ground, trod hard and smooth, and dried by the action of many a blazing fire which had beamed upon it from the wide chimney. In one back corner of the room was a comfortable bed; a loom occupied the other. A spinning-wheel stood in one side of the room, not far from the fire. A bundle of rolls was lying across the frame, and the spindle was full.

Evening.

Gilbert falls asleep.

His mother makes a bed for him.

The mother set back the table after supper, and brought out her spinning-wheel again, asking Gilbert to fix up a light, and then to go and get in his wood. Gilbert took out a long and slender piece of pitch pine from a little pile of similar pieces on a shelf, and having lighted one end, stuck the other into a crevice in the chimney, near the head of his mother's wheel. He sat down himself in the other corner, and took out of his pocket an old piece of newspaper which he had picked up in the road that day, and began slowly to spell out the contents of it by the light of the fire. Both parties being thus engaged in their several occupations, the room was still, or at least the only sounds heard were the singing of the fire, the humming of the wheel, and Gilbert's low and hesitating enunciation of the words of his newspaper. His mother reminded him once or twice of his wood, and he, as often, promised to go in a minute—as soon as he had finished his reading. Thus half an hour passed away; when at length, his mother, recollecting that she had not heard his voice for some time, looked around, and saw that he was stretched out upon his back on the floor, with his feet toward the fire, and his arms folded under his head for a pillow, fast asleep. His piece of newspaper was lying by his side.

"Why, Gilbert, my child, are you asleep?" said she; "and your wood is not in yet. Now *I* must go and get it. Well, poor boy! I suppose he was tired; and he can not lie so—not comfortably, at any rate."

So saying, she went to a little ladder which led up to a kind of loft over head from one side of the room, and brought down a well-worn bear-skin, which she spread upon the floor. She then took a pillow from her bed and laid it down upon the bear-skin. The pillow was very plain, made of tow-cloth and stuffed with corn-husks; but it was, at any rate, a better pillow than Gilbert's arms.

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Gilbert looks beautiful in his mother's eyes.

The mitten.

"Come, Gibby," said she, taking hold of him and trying to arouse him, "come, Gibby, wake up, and move over on the skin." And so, half by persuasion and half by force, she contrived to get him over. Gilbert's disturbed dreams were at first troubled with half-formed fancies of wood-piles and morning fires; but when he found his head coming in contact with a good comfortable pillow, he uttered a sort of grunt of sleepy satisfaction, and sunk at once again to repose.

"Poor boy," said his mother, "how tired and sleepy he is!"

There are very few children whose faces do not appear beautiful to a mother's eyes, at least at times. In fact, attitude, and the effect of light and shade, have such a magic power, that, under some favorable combinations, every youthful face may appear beautiful, even without the help of maternal partiality. Gilbert was not a handsome boy; but his sandy hair, then shaded by his head, assumed a rich brown hue, and his fair forehead, illuminated by the fire—his features, brought out into full relief by the flickering shadows—his complexion, brightened by the glowing light, and his full and well-turned neck, all appeared to the best possible advantage. His mother leaned over him with an expression of great fondness and pleasure in her countenance, and then kissed his forehead, saying, half aloud, "Oh, Gibby, my dear boy, I wish you *could* love your mother half as much as she loves you."

She then arose and went out into the yard, and brought in armful after armful of wood, until she had made quite a pile by the chimney corner. She replenished her fire, moved her wheel back a little way, and then brought some knitting-work from a little box or trunk under the bed, where it had been concealed. It was a mitten. She had conceived the plan some time before of knitting Gilbert a pair

The mother's reveries.

Gilbert wakes up.

The wood.

of striped mittens, intending to keep it a profound secret from him until they were finished, so as to surprise him. She had been, accordingly, for a week, very busy, in all the odd moments she could get, when Gilbert was out of sight, and late in the evenings, after her day's work was done and he had gone to bed, in pushing on her knitting, and now all was done but one thumb. When she found, therefore, that Gilbert was sound asleep, and the wood was all in, she thought it would be a fine time to finish the mitten.

The large fresh sticks of wood which she had put upon the fire soon began to simmer and sing, and the ends of her needles commenced their rapid ticking. She sat in a reverie, building castles in the air. Gilbert, in her imagination, grew up into a man, and bought a farm, and cultivated spacious fields, and raised stock, and she sat in her arm-chair by his chimney corner, and found a delightful employment in taking care of bright and happy grandchildren, whose ages and sexes she was just determining upon, when Gilbert drew a long sigh, extended back his head, and opened his eyes; in short, brought to an end both *her* dreams and his own. She was just narrowing off the thumb, but she had the presence of mind to clap her work behind her. She spoke to Gilbert, asking him whether he had had a good nap. Gilbert answered rather moodily, and sat up and looked into the fire. In a short time his faculties and his good-nature gradually returned, and he asked his mother how the bear-skin came under him.

"I put it down for you, Gilbert," said she. "And look there!" she added, with a smile, pointing to the wood she had brought in.

There was certainly a sort of smile on Gilbert's face at seeing the wood, though there was very little affection or gratitude in the expression of it. He only said,

"I am sure I am glad I have not got any wood to bring in."

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The secret.

Gilbert is dissatisfied with the mittens.

Stripe wrong.

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His mother talked with him a few minutes, hesitating whether to bring forward his mittens or not. They were not really finished, but then five minutes would finish them, and she could not resist the temptation to see how pleased he would be. So she said, with an arch look, after a moment's pause,

"Gilbert, I have got a secret."

"What is it?" said Gilbert, with an air of indifference.

His mother drew out the unfinished mitten from behind her, with the needles still attached to the tip of the thumb, and held it up.

"What is it?" said Gilbert.

"It is a mitten," said she; "it is for you; and the other is all done."

Gilbert got up and moved slowly toward his mother, saying, with a dissatisfied tone, "I don't believe it is large enough for me."

"Oh, I rather think it is large enough," said she, persuasively, and holding it open for him. "Try it on."

Gilbert pushed in his hand with an expression of reluctant and selfish pleasure on his countenance at seeing that it fitted exactly. His mother paused, looking upon the well-covered hand with a smile, and expecting Gilbert's expressions of satisfaction. But he coldly said,

"What did you have a green stripe in it for, mother? I should like blue a great deal better."

"Why, Gilbert," she replied, mournfully, pulling off the mitten, "I took a great deal of pains to make these mittens for you; I am sorry you don't like them any better."

The grieved and disappointed mother could hardly finish her sentence. She felt the tears coming fast into her eyes, and rose, put the mitten in the chair, and turned away to the back side of the room. She struggled against her feelings as well as she could; she went and looked out at the



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Gilbert's mother's disappointment and grief.A stranger.

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window, then came back and stood by the fire, and finally commanded composure enough to say to Gilbert, in a tolerably steady voice, that it was about time for him to go to bed. Gilbert felt a little conscience-smitten, and besides that, he was somewhat sleepy; so he took up his bear-skin, clambered up the ladder to the loft above, and disappeared, the loose boards yielding and rattling under his tread. His mother sank down into her chair by the fire, rested her elbows upon her knees, and her face in her hands, and burst into tears.

A moment afterward she thought she heard the distant jingling of sleigh-bells. She raised her head to listen. Yes, there were certainly sleigh-bells coming up the road. She went to the window, and finding that the sound was approaching nearer, she watched a moment, and presently saw, emerging from the woods, a horse, followed by a sleigh, with one, and perhaps two persons in it. The sky was overcast, but the moon gave sufficient light through the clouds to enable her to see this. In a moment more the sleigh passed beyond her view, as it moved on toward the front of the house. She wondered what traveler could be out on that road at that time of night, and then immediately had occasion to wonder still more at observing that the sound of the bells ceased opposite her own door.

A moment afterward she heard a tap, made apparently by using the end of a whip-handle for a knocker. She answered, "Come in." The door opened, and there entered a very respectable-looking old gentleman, well wrapped up in a traveling dress. His countenance had a frank and open, and very benevolent expression, and there was something so gentlemanly in his whole air and manner as to inspire his hostess at once with respect and confidence. She handed him a chair, and invited him to warm himself by her fire.

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Gilbert's mother gives the traveler some supper.

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He said that he was traveling, and called in to make some inquiries about the way. "But," said he, "do not let me take your seat," looking around and observing that there was but one chair.

"Oh, I can sit here just as well," she replied, as she took her seat upon a chest under one of the windows.

They entered into conversation, and it appeared that the gentleman was traveling through that part of the country on business, and had in some degree lost his reckoning. He had many miles to go before he could reach his place of lodging for the night, and as he had accidentally fallen upon so cheerful a fireside, he concluded to accept his hostess's offer of some refreshment. She accordingly prepared him a rich bowl of bread and milk, which he seemed to enjoy very much, and in the mean time they both told their whole story each to the other, for solitary modes of life make people both curious and communicative. And so the guest, being affable and kind in his disposition and manners, and perceiving that some burden weighed upon his hostess's spirits, which seemed to be lightened and relieved by his conversation, told her where he came from, and where he was going; mentioned the little items of news which he brought from the busier world in which he was accustomed to move, and the little incidents and adventures which he had met with on his journey. She, in return, gave him some of the particulars of her history. He seemed to imagine that her situation must be lonely and uncomfortable, but she assured him it was not so. Her house was snug and comfortable; it was large enough for her, and a *very* warm house in the winter. She had plenty of every thing, for her loom and wheel, and now and then a little tub of butter, brought her all the money she needed; and though the country was rough, the land on her place was excellent, and she raised abundance of vegetables, and grain, and hay,

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She declines to receive any pay.Conversation about Gilbert.

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though she had to hire a hand in haying and harvesting ; and then it did not seem lonesome to her at all. "In fact," said she, "it is just about far enough from the Corner to keep Gibby out of harm's way."

At last the old gentleman began to think of going, and asked his hostess what he should pay for his excellent supper.

"Oh, nothing at all, sir," said she ; "you are very welcome."

"Certainly," said he, "I must pay you something. You can not afford to get suppers for travelers for nothing."

"Oh no, indeed, sir," said she, "I could not think of taking any thing for a little milk. We have a great plenty of milk."

The gentleman smiled. He said he knew some great dealers in merchandise that would not consider that a very satisfactory reason for not receiving the "*quid pro quo*."

"The *what*, sir?" said the hostess.

"Why, pay for what they sell ; but I won't insist upon it, though I am sure I feel greatly obliged to you, and I hope that some time or other I shall be able to make some return. Is there no way that I can render you any service now? You seem dejected and sad. I have had some experience in the world, and seen a great many troubles."

Encouraged thus, she told him what had troubled her mind when he came in, and then, led on by his expressions of kindness and sympathy, she unburdened her heart entirely to him. She told him how long she had tried to win Gilbert's love, but all in vain, and she described her efforts in detail, and their utter want of success. "I would give the world to have him love me, but he cares nothing for me at all. Now what can I do?"

"Is he idle and disobedient?" asked the guest.

"Why no, I don't think he is, generally. He does his

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Farther conversation between Gilbert's mother and the stranger.

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work, most days, as well as you could expect of such a boy. He helps me a good deal ; but that I don't care about much. He doesn't seem to do it out of regard to me. If he should bring me home even a flower out of the woods because he thought it would please me, I should like it better than all the work he does now, from morning to night."

"I see," said the traveler ; "you want his heart, not merely his cold, outward obedience."

"Yes, sir," said she, "that is it, exactly."

The traveler paused a moment, looking into the fire, apparently lost in thought. He then said,

"When you make him presents, or do him some little kindnesses, how does he receive them ? Does he seem grateful then ?"

"No, sir, I don't think he does. He generally likes the present well enough, and is glad to get it and use it, but then I don't see that he thinks any thing about its coming from me."

"He takes the gift with a selfish pleasure, but has no grateful feeling toward the giver ?"

"Yes, sir ; and sometimes he murmurs and complains when I have done the best I could for him."

The traveler sat in silence again several minutes, apparently lost once more in thought.

He presently turned round toward his hostess and said,

"You ask me what you shall do, and I can not well tell you unless I first ask you one or two questions about yourself, which perhaps it would not be proper for me to ask under other circumstances. If you would rather not answer them, do not hesitate to say so. Are you in the habit of morning and evening prayer ?"

The mother's eye dropped. She looked embarrassed, shook her head, and answered faintly, "No, sir."

"Do you read the Bible much ?"

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A confession.Alienation of the heart from God.

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"No, sir," said she, timidly. "We used to have one, but its 'most worn out."

"And do you never read the Bible, or pray secretly to God?"

"I used to, some, when I was young, but not of late years."

"Then there is now no communication whatever between your soul and God?"

She hung her head and made no reply.

"No thanksgiving for his favors—no love or affection returned for his goodness—no desire to do any thing to please him?"

The speaker paused at each inquiry, but his hostess made no reply, and yet the expression of her countenance showed that her feeling was not displeasure that the questions were asked, but self-reproach awakened by the answer which her conscience gave.

"Perhaps," said the traveler, "I do wrong to press you with these inquiries. I am sure, after the kindness you have shown to me, I ought not to be uncivil or rude. But the truth is, that your child is to you exactly what you yourself are to your parent above. All that you have done to win his love, God has done to win yours, and your child's repulses of your affection are exactly analogous to your repulses of the love of God. I could not help thinking, while you were speaking of Gilbert, how exactly all you said would apply to the course we naturally take in regard to God. We are as industrious and regular in the performance of our usual round of duties as other persons are, but we do nothing for the sake of pleasing God. We turn cold looks and language toward him. We take his gifts with a kind of selfish gratification, but with no feelings of grateful affection for the giver; and sometimes, like Gilbert, openly murmur and complain when God has done the best that could

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The stranger takes his leave.The sleigh-bells.

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be done for us. Now have not you been such? If so, you have reaped as you have sowed. Gilbert is an ungrateful and undutiful child, just like his mother."

When the sin of alienation from God is brought home plainly to the wanderer, he generally receives the reproof in silence, but it may be either the silence of sullen displeasure, or the silence of self-condemnation, that is grateful for the reproof, while it feels very acutely the sting of it. The traveler perceived from the expression of his hostess's countenance that the latter was her feeling.

He rose and prepared to go; and as he stood by the fire, he apologized again for the plainness with which he had spoken. "I know," said he, "that I must have given you pain, but it is so much better to know the honest truth at once—and I may never see you again. And now farewell," said he; "I shall not forget your hospitality to me, and I do most sincerely hope that *both* of the ungrateful and undutiful children will become reconciled to their parents soon."

The mother replied with a downcast eye and trembling voice that she was much obliged to him for his visit and for his conversation, and begged that if he ever passed that way again, he would certainly call. The traveler promised to do so as he was going out. The door closed after him. She heard that little preparatory jingling of the bells which accompanies the untying of the horse and the drawing up of the reins with a vague and undefined wish that something would bring her guest back again before he went away. A new field of thought was suddenly opened before her mind, and though she seemed to have nothing to say herself, she was very reluctant to have the conversation so abruptly closed. Then, besides, the evident feeling of kindness and sympathy for her which the traveler manifested touched her heart, and made her look upon him as a more real

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The stranger is invited to return and spend the night.

Reason for declining.

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friend than she had met with for many years. The very plainness and bluntness of his address seemed evidence of his cordial sincerity.

She stood a moment with her hand upon the wooden latch of the door, and then opened it just as the traveler had taken his seat in the sleigh. His horse was beginning to move off, but he drew up the reins and checked him.

"I did not ask you, sir," said she, "to stay all night. I have not very good accommodations, but it is getting late, and if you stay I will try to make you as comfortable as I can. There's a chamber over head for me."

"I thank you," replied the traveler; "your accommodations are good enough for the governor; but I am afraid to stay. *That* looks rather threatening," he added, pointing to a long, flat bank of cloud which lay on the summit of old Hoaryhead, which was distinctly seen by moonlight across the valley. "If it should rain before morning, this cross-road would *slump* so that it would be almost impossible to get along. I shall soon come to the river, and there I come out upon a good road. But I am very much obliged to you. Good-night."

She returned his salutation, and stood at the door watching the horse as he moved off at a gentle trot, and soon disappeared in the forest. The sound of the bells gradually died away upon her ear, and she returned to her seat by the chimney corner, and felt, almost for the first time, really lonely in her solitary cottage. Her conscience was awakened, and it is an uneasy conscience that gives gloom and melancholy to solitude.

Now it happened that Gilbert, whose nap upon the floor had taken off the edge of his appetite for sleep, was only just beginning to feel drowsy, and to lose himself in dreamy forgetfulness, when the traveler came up to the door, and his loud knock aroused him. He listened, but lay perfectly

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Gilbert in the loft.He overhears the conversation.

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still, fearing that his services might be called for in some way if it was known that he was awake. He heard afterward all the conversation. It brought a new view of the subject to his mind. He lay on a little straw bed, with the bear-skin for a coverlet, hearing the conversation, and watching all that was going on ; for there came up through the many interstices of the floor bright beams from the fire, and shadows, which flickered on the sloping slabs over his head that formed the roof ; and these reflections, and the various sounds which penetrated the flooring with equal facility, indicated to him every thing that was going on. Now and then, too, he stretched his head out of his bed, and applied his eye to the largest crack within his reach, to get a more exact idea of the state of things below ; and then, after a few minutes, when the cold air, playing around his shoulders, chilled him, he would draw back again, and cover himself up once more with his bear-skin, and content himself with watching the shadows, and listening to the traveler's voice.

Gilbert often had vague and indistinct ideas of his ingratitude to his mother, but the subject had never been brought so formally and directly to his mind before. There are two ways in which we may attempt to awaken any particular class of feelings in the human mind : one, by bringing such circumstances to bear upon the individual as tend spontaneously to awaken the feelings ; and the other, by arousing reason and conscience to the duty of cherishing them. The one is an attempt to produce them by an influence from without ; the other, to bring them up through the force of a determination from within. Gilbert's mother had been pursuing the former course. By showing kindness to him, and making him little presents, she had endeavored to bring him under the influence of those circumstances which ought to have at once awakened the feelings, and



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Helplessness of the human soul in its sins.

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God had been dealing in precisely the same way with her. But now the Christian traveler had approached both by a totally different mode of action. He presented the *duty* of gratitude, and, leaving the circumstances unchanged, he showed that for a heart to remain cold and unfeeling in such circumstances was a great sin; so that night, when Gilbert and his mother were lying upon their beds, and about composing themselves to rest, after the traveler had gone, they saw not any new favors or kindnesses to act upon their hearts, but only the guilt of remaining cold and ungrateful under the favors and kindnesses that they were already receiving.

Now it is a melancholy exemplification of the helplessness of human nature in its sins, that if right feelings do not come spontaneously into the heart, they will not generally come by being called for. So plain and yet so kind a reproof as that which the traveler administered to his hostess will generally accomplish at once all the *direct* objects it aims at. He wished to show her that she was ungrateful and undutiful as a child of God. He succeeded. She saw plainly that she was so. He wished to awaken her conscience. He succeeded. As she lay awake that night, she was anxious and unhappy about the past, and felt many vague forebodings about the future. He wished to lead her to determine that she would change her course, and henceforward become a more dutiful child. He succeeded in this too. She did determine. But here was a stop. Between the conviction that she ought to return to God and the actual return itself—between the cold determination to be grateful and the springing up of warm emotions of gratitude in her soul, she soon found that there was an awful chasm, which she could neither bridge nor fill. After lying awake an hour, now repeating the traveler's words, now pondering upon her past life, now trying

Gilbert wakes.

Rain on the roof.

Gilbert's resolutions.

to pray, she seemed to give up her effort as a sort of useless struggle ; her soul sunk into a state of mingled stupor and despair. All the progress she made was to see that her heart was really alienated from God, and that she could not change it—that is, so it seemed to her. She could think of his favors, and could see that she was ungrateful, but somehow or other she could not really love him as she wanted Gilbert to love her.

Gilbert himself was in much the same state of mind. His conscience was disturbed, but he quieted it by determining that he would be more dutiful and obedient hereafter, and then gradually sank to sleep.

When he opened his eyes the next morning, he heard the rain pattering heavily upon the roof over his head, and in a moment after he perceived by the sounds below that his mother was getting up. If he had really felt the affection which, the night before, he had determined to feel, he would have sprung up instantly, and gone down to help her make the fire. But, notwithstanding his resolution, his heart was unchanged ; so he lay still, thinking that he ought to get up, and resolving that he would in a minute or two. But the minutes passed on, and he came no nearer to a decision. He lay listening to the sounds which came up from the room below : now he heard his mother's steps as she walked around the room ; now she was laying wood upon the fire ; now moving back the table ; and presently he heard the crackling and blazing of the fuel, which had been drying and heating all night upon the hearth. Gilbert then said to himself, "I declare I *will* get up ;" and throwing off the bear-skin as in a fit of desperation, rose and prepared to descend the ladder. He had an idea, while he was dressing himself, that he acted at last out of regard to his mother, but he was mistaken ; the real spring was the idea of a pleasant fireside and a good breakfast below.

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Conversation between Gilbert and his mother in the morning.

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While breakfast was preparing, Gilbert rendered his mother such little assistance around the fire as he could, and with rather more alacrity than usual; and he made less objection to going out to the barn, getting the water, and bringing in his wood than he was wont to do. His mother longed to tell him of the conversation of the traveler, and of the new anxieties and fears which had sprung up in her bosom. She had no particular object in this, only she felt a strong desire to unburden her mind, and to make a confidant of her son. After much hesitation, she said at last,

"Gilbert, there was a traveler here last night, after you went to bed."

"Yes, mother," said Gilbert, "I heard him come in."

"Did you?" said his mother.

"Yes, mother; he knocked so loud it waked me up."

"Could you hear us talk?"

"Why, yes," said Gilbert.

There was a moment's pause. She then said timidly, "Did you hear what I told him about you?"

"Yes, mother; and I am determined to be a better boy."

Gilbert said this with a cordial, honest tone, and the words went directly to his mother's heart. Perhaps the reader may think he was hypocritical, but he was not. He did really intend to be a better boy. He did not realize how difficult the change would be which his mother desired. His idea of being a better boy was to make some external change in his mode of doing his duties, not reflecting that what his mother wanted was his heart, and that this it would be more difficult to change than he had supposed.

She could herself hardly contain the pleasure which this spontaneous promise of her son awakened. She spoke to him in the kindest manner, eagerly helped him in all he

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Gilbert makes preparations to go with the yarn.

Israel.

had to do, and, while he was eating his breakfast, she finished off his mitten, and laid the pair smoothly by his side. It was necessary for him to go down to the Corner, as she had intimated the evening before, but now she hardly dared mention it again, lest he should make objections, and thus destroy the bright vision of obedience and affection which filled her mind. She seemed afraid to put his resolution to the test, as if she thought the ice was not yet strong enough to sustain the little load of duty which it seemed necessary to put upon it.

The yarn must be carried, however, and she accordingly, in a very mild and persuasive manner, asked Gilbert if he thought he could go down with it. To her surprise and pleasure, he made no objection, and after breakfast prepared to go.

He tied the bundle of yarn upon his sled before the fire, received very special directions, put on his cap and drew it down over his ears, pulled on his new mittens, and sallied forth, pleasantly bidding his mother good-morning. She felt really proud of her boy, and, to tell the truth, he was a little proud of himself. He forgot how easy it is to do right when there is no temptation to do wrong.

He had gone only a few steps before he saw a wood-sled, drawn by a single yoke of oxen, coming up the road. A large boy was standing upon one corner of the sled, holding on by one of the stakes with one hand, and flourishing a long goad-stick in the other. The team came into Gilbert's view suddenly at a little bend in the road. He stepped out on one side to let the oxen pass, calling out at the same time,

"Why, Israel, I did not know you were going this morning."

"Jump on," said Israel. "Where are you going?"

"I was going down to the Corner with this yarn; but—"

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Gilbert wishes to go a sledding with Israel.

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ISRAEL WITH HIS TEAM.

"Oh, you must go with me," said Israel; "you can carry that down at some other time."

"But my mother very much wants me to do it this morning. But then she did not know that you were going to haul wood to-day. I'll go and ask her."

By this time they had arrived opposite the house where Gil-

bert lived. Israel stopped his team, and waited, while Gilbert went to the door, dragging his sled after him. He dropped the string upon the threshold, and ran in.

His mother had just been bringing out her wheel before the fire.

"Mother," said Gilbert, eagerly, "here is Israel going a sledding, and I *wish* you would let me go too. I can carry the yarn down to-night or to-morrow."

The request came upon the mother like a blow. Her fond visions of filial affection and gratitude vanished into air. She leaned upon the head of her spinning-wheel, looked mournfully into Gilbert's face, and said,

"Why, Gilbert, I promised to send it this morning. I must go if you do not."

"Oh, mother," said he, "*do* let me go this time. It's the last time Israel is going this week. Do let me go."

She leaned her forehead upon her hand a moment in thoughtful melancholy, and then said,

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His mother consents.She feels very unhappy.

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"Yes, Gilbert, you may go."

Gilbert waited to hear no more. He darted off, opened the door, and whirled through, pulling it after him with violence, leaped over his little load of yarn, and ran out to the road. He clambered up upon the wood-sled, and took his stand on the corner opposite to Israel's, clinging to one of the stakes. His mother came to the door to shut it, for it had rebounded and opened again after Gilbert had gone. As she closed it, she saw her boy riding off, flourishing Israel's goad-stick in the air, and shouting to the oxen at the top of his lungs.

She returned into the house, and stood a few minutes at the window, looking up the valley, following Gilbert with her eye. The team soon turned off by a narrow road into the woods and disappeared from view. She then moved her wheel back into its place, took down the fire, laid the burning brands together so that they could not fall, and then made her simple preparations for her walk. A coarse shawl was her protection from the wind, and her hood she adjusted by the aid of a small fragment of a looking-glass which hung by the side of the window. When all was ready, she took one more look at the fire, and then sallied forth. She untied the bundle from the sled, and took it under her arm, moving the sled to one side, and then, with a heavy heart, walked down the road in a direction opposite to the one which Gilbert had taken.

The idea which the traveler had put into her head, of seeing the image of her own condition in respect to God reflected in that of her son toward her, she could not help following out. At first, as she walked along, she brooded over her disappointment at finding how far her boy was, after all his resolutions, from any real change of feeling. Then she saw how deeply seated were the affections of the soul, and how great and how completely *internal* must be

Sorrowful reflections.

The Corner.

Shopping.

the change she desired to see in him. She then could not help reflecting that the disease in her own heart was equally deeply seated, and that a change of a very fundamental character must take place in the inmost constitution of her soul before any such warm, and heartfelt, and steady affection for God would exist in her as she desired to see in her son. She thought of her resolutions of amendment the night before, and of the cold, and formal, and entirely unsuccessful effort at prayer she had made that morning; and she perceived that they all arose from a mere external resolve, which was stimulated only by an uneasy conscience, while the current of selfish and worldly affections flowed on, far below, in her heart, as steady and strong as ever. She felt doubly miserable; for she saw, more distinctly than ever before, how utterly beyond the reach of any means she could command was the obduracy of Gilbert's heart, and more than feared that the difficulty was just as great in her own.

A walk of three quarters of an hour brought her to the little store at the Corner. This store was, of course, grocery, book-store, draper's, milliner's, and cutler's, all combined; and after finishing her business, and receiving in exchange for her yarn the little necessities she needed, she asked the man to put up a cheap Testament among the rest. The store-keeper looked at her with a momentary expression of surprise, and then went to get it. In the mean time she stood at the fire warming herself, and she thought he was longer than usual in bringing the book. However, he brought it to her at length, enveloped in brown paper, and she gathered up her parcels and returned to her solitary home.

She worked hard all day to redeem the time in her spinning which had been occupied by her walk, and toward evening Gilbert came home. He felt somewhat self-con-

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Gilbert's mother brings home a Testament.She finds a note in it.

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demned, and consequently uneasy, and soon after supper clambered up his ladder and retired to rest. His mother, when her work was done, drew up her little table to the fire, placed her Testament upon it, and taking her seat by the side of it, began to untie the parcel by the light of the fire. As she removed the envelope two papers dropped out, one white, the other brown, with something heavy wrapped in it. She picked up the latter and opened it, and found that it contained money—just the amount she had paid for the Testament. The other was a narrow strip of white paper folded once. She opened it, and read as follows :

“ I return the price of the Testament. Will you accept the book as a present from me ? I observed that you looked dejected and sad. If the cause is what I suppose, I think that in John vi., 44, you will find an intimation of the way to obtain relief and happiness. Excuse this liberty, and believe me yours very sincerely, T. B.”

She opened the little Testament and turned to the passage. She found that there was already a mark put in at the place. She was but a slow reader, and she had some difficulty in finding the versè. At length she fixed her finger upon it, and turning the book well toward the fire, she read aloud, but very slowly, as follows :

“ No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

“ Yes,” said she, after a moment's pause, “ he means that I must come to Christ, and that I can not come unless the Father will draw me ; and that I must look to Jesus to save me at last.”



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Gilbert's mother can not change her own heart:Her despair.

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The exact transition from the natural coldness and indifference of the human heart toward God to sincere and heartfelt love, is generally concealed. The observer is like the geologist, who passes from a sterile granite region to a fertile alluvion. The change of formation is obvious and decided enough, but the actual point of junction is concealed by the coverings of soil and vegetation; so the spiritual change is generally hidden in its beginnings; but when we do get access to it, we find that it is almost always preceded by the very feelings of self-abandonment and despair to which this solitary mother was just ready to yield. She had been feeling all day that the change necessary was too great for her to effect. She saw that she might perhaps herself overcome fear, or indolence, or pain, or any external influence, by determined resolution, but how to *love* by dint of determined resolution seemed a desperate difficulty. Then she was perplexed by the metaphysical mysteries which beset the subject—mysteries which the highest intellect can not explain, but which always come home to the most uncultivated soul in its hours of darkness and trial. Twenty times during the afternoon and evening she had said to herself, at the close of fruitless attempts at ejaculatory prayer, "It is of no use. I do not really love God, and I can not love him. Then it is not my fault. Yes it is; it only shows how very wicked my heart is. But if I can not change it—" she would say, pausing from her work a moment in the extreme of perplexity; and then, after in vain endeavoring to unravel the mystery, she would draw a deep sigh, clasp her hands together, and cry out, "O my God, what shall I do?"

Nor was she needlessly alarmed. Her heart was much in the situation she supposed—destitute of any real affection for God, and only aroused from indifference to the subject by an awakened conscience and by personal fears. We

Self-abandonment.

The penitent sinner's prayer.

A little relief.

might call them selfish fears were it not that that term would seem to imply that there was something wrong in them. She was, however, really alarmed, and yet saw that there was no direct tendency in her alarm to remedy the difficulty. She had good sense and a clear head, and she saw something in the very nature of the change which she wished to see in Gilbert, and which God required in her, which put it beyond the reach of any measures she could adopt, originating in an awakened conscience or in personal fears.

The verse she read gave her a glimpse of light. She laid her arms upon the table, and rested her cheek upon her arms, with her face toward the fire, and for a few moments seemed lost in melancholy thought. There was the external aspect of composure—for she was of a northern clime—but there was a tumultuous sea of agitation and anxiety within.

In a few minutes she rose, went back to her bedside, fell upon her knees, buried her face in her hands, and in a deep, mellow voice, gentle and trembling, cried out as follows :

“O God, mercy, mercy for me! I have been ungrateful and undutiful all my days, and am so still. I can not ask for pardon, for I am not penitent. I am afraid to pray, for I am still unchanged. My guilt clings to me, and I must come with it all upon my head into thy dread presence. O God, cast me not away. Change me. Make me a new creature—draw me to Jesus, oh my father!”

She remained a few moments upon her knees, feeling herself in the immediate presence of God. She gazed upon the majestic holiness of the being which rose before her mind with a sort of satisfaction at having thrown herself upon his mercy. Though she did not perceive any new love for him springing up from her soul, she could not help hoping

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Morning.Aspect of Hoaryhead in the morning sun.

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that her prayer would be heard, and that light and peace would come. She returned to her seat by the fire, opened her Testament, and read a chapter, and then prepared to retire to rest. The bitterness of her cup of anxiety seemed to have passed in some degree away, and she looked upon God with feelings much like those with which the traveler regards a vast overhanging rock to which he has fled for shelter in a storm. He gazes upon the shelving masses above him with awe, and almost with terror, and yet the very fact that he has fled to it makes him see in it a protector and a friend.

Nothing gives a sounder sleep at night than a day of anxiety and sorrow. Gilbert's mother, at least, slept serenely, and when she opened her eyes next morning, she saw through the little window that the sky was ruddy. "Ah! can it be morning?" said she. "So God has kept me safely through another night;" and tears came into her eyes, yet she scarcely knew why.

She rose and dressed herself, and built her blazing fire upon the rude stones which served as andirons. She opened her door and looked upon the grand scenery around her. It was a beautiful winter morning, and the lofty summits of old Hoaryhead were bright with the beams of the rising sun. She stood looking upon it a few minutes, and then came in and commenced her preparations for breakfast; and her mind being in a state of much greater repose than it was the day before, she felt some uneasiness lest she was relapsing into her former indifference to God and to her salvation. But the heart can not long mistake the repose of gladness and peace for the sullen stupidity of sin. And when she took out her Testament, and spelled out a chapter in the epistles, while breakfast was waiting for Gilbert to return from his morning's work in the barn, it seemed to her, as she afterward said, that she did really love the Re-

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A great change wrought.

Gilbert.

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deemer, whom she read about there. The change was begun. The current was turned. It seemed now as hard to be indifferent as it was before hard to love.

Gilbert observed the subdued and softened tone of his mother's voice, and the mild and peaceful expression of her eye. But we will pause here, and make Gilbert himself the hero of another chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

## GILBERT, OR THE SEQUEL.

It was Sabbath morning. The winter had passed away, and April was near, and yet the snow appeared to have been very little diminished. The sun at noon had thawed and settled it, day after day, for many weeks, until at last it had become so compact, that every morning, after a frosty night, it presented a very firm and solid surface to walk upon. In fact, there is, perhaps, no surface so pleasant to the foot as this consolidated snow. All minor inequalities and roughnesses are covered and obliterated, and the smooth white flooring extends in levels or in gentle undulations every way before you. Then there is a crispy roughness in the surface which holds the foot by its friction, and almost has the effect of throwing the walker forward by a force of its own. There seems to be an elasticity—a rebound, which makes every step a luxury. Then there are, above and around, all the exhilarating influences of a spring morning—the calmness, the sunshine, the glitter, the hum, and all those indescribable sensations with which we witness the quiet and gentle dissolution of the icy thralldom in which Nature has so long been held.

Gilbert stood on the surface of the snow in front of his mother's log house. There was a broad icy path which led from the door out to the road. On each side of this path the snow swelled and spread on every side. From one corner of the house a range of small logs appeared

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Description of the yard.Gilbert and his mother set out from home.

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above the snow, extending end to end in a line out toward the road. They were the upper tier in the log fence, five feet high, the lower portion being buried and concealed. On the opposite side of the house was a sled-road leading into a spacious yard, with a little barn and shed at the side of it. A large pile of wood, in very long and large logs, lay in the middle of the yard, and in the sunniest corner, close to the shed, stood a demure-looking cow, considering apparently with great gravity whether she had better remain and enjoy the reflected warmth, or move away on account of the cold drops which came down now and then upon her back from the eaves above.

The door of the house was open, and Gilbert was waiting for his mother. He sat down on one of the logs of the fence, and seemed to be looking very intently at something in the snow. Presently he looked up and saw his mother at the door. She stood there a moment, adjusting her shawl and tying on her bonnet.

"Come, mother, come," said Gilbert, playfully, "it is time to go."

"Yes," said she, looking at the sun, "it is rather late, I see."

"You had better come round this way, mother, for it's very icy in the path."

"Will the crust bear?" said she, stepping cautiously upon the snow.

"Bear?" said Gilbert, rising and jumping upon it, "it would bear an ox team. Just look here, mother," continued he, as she approached him. He pointed to the surface of the snow where a wasp had fallen, and had sunk, by the heat which his body had absorbed from the sun, an inch or more into the snow, the little pit being exactly of the size of his body.

"What is it?" said his mother.

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Gilbert proposes to go across.

The valley.

They come to the brook.

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"A wasp. I don't see how he happened to fall right exactly into that little hole."

"Perhaps he crawled in," said his mother, walking on. "But come, we must go."

"Mother," said Gilbert, coming up behind her, "let's go across. It is not half so far across, and it is beautiful walking on the crust."

It was the Sabbath, as we have already mentioned, and this party were going to attend the public worship of God, with forty or fifty other families from the surrounding valleys and hills. A small school-house served for a church. It was situated on another road, at a distance of nearly two miles round by the road, though it was but a short walk across through the intervening valley. Gilbert proposed to his mother that they should take this latter route. After some hesitation, she consented, and they stepped over the top of the stone wall which appeared above the snow across the road, and began to descend into the valley.

They rambled along, sometimes in the woods and sometimes in open ground, but always over a smooth surface, until they reached a level piece of ground covered with the forest in the bottom of the dell. In the summer this was a swamp—impassable; but now the flags, and bulrushes, and moss, and water were all several feet beneath the snow, and there was firm and pleasant walking in every direction under the tall cedars. Gilbert sometimes ran on before his mother, and sometimes fell behind, interested in examining a thousand objects, and enjoying every sensation. Presently they came to the channel of the brook. Its waters had been raised above the surface of the snow by a thaw which took place a week or two before, and then a sudden frost had consolidated the whole, so that now broad sheets and reaches of ice extended along the bed of the stream, with the diminished current of water wriggling and gur-

gling along in the cavities and channels below. Sometimes the ice expanded to a considerable breadth, where the water had flowed smoothly and slowly, and at others the stream was contracted between rocks, or tumbled down in cascades, the water itself concealed behind monstrous and misshapen icicles, or massive stalagmites, or rounded and protruded summits of "anchor ice." There was no end to the brilliant colors and fantastic forms of the *honey-combs*, and the *net-work*, and the *needles*, and the *stars* which Gilbert was continually finding, and there were horses, and soldiers, and caverns, and giants with ponderous clubs, and balloons just ready to ascend into the air. Then Gilbert was never tired of gazing at the curious effect of the water trickling and gurgling down over a rock or along a stony bottom, as seen through its icy covering. In a word, Gilbert was in an ecstasy. His mother too, though more quiet and sedate in her enjoyment, was equally pleased. She walked happily along, admiring the wonders which Gilbert had discovered and pointed out. She had, in fact, a source of deeper and purer joy than his, in the reflection which she was continually making, "My Father made them all."

When any of the peculiar beauties or wonders of nature are presented to the eye on the Sabbath, perhaps they more frequently tend to draw away the mind from God than toward him. But there are some seasons, or perhaps some states of mind, when the effect is the reverse, and the mind seems to perceive, by a direct moral vision, the glories and the loveliness of divinity in every enchantment around. The soul seems predisposed to gratitude and filial love, and every sight and sound comes with associations of unspeakable tenderness, and peace, and joy. Gilbert's mother was at this time in such a state of mind, and she moved leisurely along—for, now that they had taken a shorter road, there was ample time—Gilbert rambling around her



Path through the woods.	Gilbert's playfulness.	Conversation.
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like a satellite, and all the aspects of nature beaming with an expression of the sweetest peace and happiness upon her soul. She mused in silence, her heart reposing with happy confidence in the presence and communion of the Savior, with a smile of gladness and peace over every feature, and her eyes half filled with tears.

At length they left the bed of the brook, and turned off into a horse-path through the woods, which they thought would bring them out near the school-house. The path had not been broken out, so that it aided them only by affording an unobstructed passage through the trees, and they walked along upon the untracked snow far above the surface of the ground.

"And now, Gilbert," said his mother, when they entered upon this secluded path, and the thicket of trees and bushes on each side seemed to shut out every thing that might distract attention, "now, Gilbert, come and walk quietly by me; I want to talk with you."

Gilbert came with a leap and a bound, took hold of his mother's hand, and, hanging by it, began whipping crosses on the snow with a long slender rod he held in his hand.

"Throw away your stick, Gilbert, and walk along quietly; I want to talk with you."

"I'll hide it under this log, mother," said the boy, capering to the side of the road and concealing his plaything, "and then I can get it when we come back."

"Gilbert," said she, as he came to her side again, "I have been thinking lately about God more than I used to do. I have been thinking how kind he has been to us, and how ungrateful we have been to him; and after this I am going to do differently."

Gilbert walked along without making any reply.

"One thing I am going to do, Gilbert, is to read the Bible and pray to God with you every night and morning."

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Gilbert's mother announces new plans and determinations.

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"Shall *you* make the prayer, mother?" said Gilbert, with an inflection in which were combined an expression of solemnity and of surprise.

"Yes, Gilbert; God will help me. I wish you were old enough, and had the heart to do it."

"I might read the Bible, mother," said he, thoughtfully.

"Yes, so you can, and that will be an excellent plan for us."

Here Gilbert darted off to the side of the road, and took up a smooth stick which lay upon the snow. It was part of a dead and brittle branch which the wind had broken off from a tree above. He ran back with it, using it for a walking-cane, and saying,

"When are you going to begin, mother?"

"To-night."

"And besides," said she, "Gilbert, I am going to do differently by you; I don't think I have done quite right by you."

"Why, mother!" said Gilbert, in a tone of great surprise, marching along at the same time with a very martial air, striking his stick into the snow at every step by way of keeping time, "I am sure I think you have been very kind to me."

"Yes, Gilbert, I am afraid I've humored you too much."

Here Gilbert dropped his mother's hand and stopped. She looked round, and saw that his eye was fixed upon an object at a little distance in the wood, and he was drawing back his stick to throw it. In an instant the stick flew, end over end, through the air, and struck the bottom of a stump just in the edge of the wood, and at the same moment two snow-birds flew away from the top of it.

"Oh, mother!" said he; "a little more! There were two of them, mother; did you see?"

"Yes, I saw them; but you ought not to throw at the

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Gilbert is somewhat surprised.

His mother's resolutions.

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birds, Gilbert; it is Sabbath day. Besides, I want you to hear me."

"Well, mother, I will," said Gilbert, and began again to walk with forced decorum by her side.

"I have let you have your own way too much, Gilbert," she continued, "and have not kept you enough at regular work. But I am going to be more strict after this; but it is all for your good in the end, Gibby."

Gilbert walked quietly along, but said nothing. His mother had made resolutions to be more strict with him a thousand times before, but now she seemed to talk in a different tone. On former occasions she had been more loud, and earnest, and emphatic. Now she spoke in a quiet and subdued voice, and Gilbert was wondering whether she was or was not really going to make any alteration.

The truth was, that the whole aspect of the course she should pursue with her boy had changed in her mind. Her policy had been to endeavor to show him every possible kindness and indulgence, in hope of securing his love. Now her desire was to do her duty as a mother, in obedience to the commands of God. She had looked over her Testament to find all that was said there on the subject of parental duties, and her own common sense taught her that if she was to consider simply what was her duty, and act with reference to his permanent good, she should take a very different course from the one which she had been pursuing. Then, besides, she saw more clearly than before how entirely it was beyond her power to produce any such change in him as she desired, and she felt a sort of satisfaction in giving up the case into God's hands. Before, she had felt that the responsibility of final success was resting upon her, and this responsibility was vague, undefined, and it seemed to reach forward indefinitely into the future; but now she had exchanged this heavy burden for the sim-

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Gilbert's indifference.The school-house comes into view.

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ple task of doing duty day by day. How many an anxious, care-worn, exhausted spirit, sinking under burdens which God never intended us to bear, might secure immediate peace and happiness by a similar change.

As Gilbert and his mother walked on, she tried in vain to interest him in her new views of life and its duties. He listened now and then, and he obeyed her directions, but it was plain that such subjects as improvement, permanent good, and duty, had no great charms for him. His thoughts ran off continually in every direction, allured by the sight of a snow-bird, the form of some fantastic tree, a deserted nest, or a cluster of red berries. We would not judge him too harshly, and certainly do not blame him for loving nature in its winter dress, but we can not help wishing he could have taken some interest also in duty, and in his obligations to his mother and to God.

At length the path, or rather pathway, in which they were walking, emerged from the wood, and the school-house came into view. It was small, and very plain in its exterior; and numerous sleighs, of various shapes and colors, were standing near, the horses fastened to the fence by the roadside. Approaching thus the termination of their walk, the conversation must necessarily be closed. The mother had entertained a faint hope that she might have led her son to take some little interest, at least, in her new plans; but when the school-house came into view, and she saw that the opportunity was past, and reflected how entirely she had failed in making any impression whatever, a momentary feeling of despondency came over her. Her spirits rose again, however, immediately, from their depression, by the thought that faithful daily duty was all which was required of her, and committing the whole case to God in respect to the ultimate disposal of it, she walked in and took her place in the little congregation.

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Picture of the school-house.The meeting over.

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THE CHURCH.

There was but one service, but that was a long one. The seats were filled, the fire went down, and the warm sun shone in at the open door. It was long after noon when a burst of boys from the little entry announced the close of the services. Athletic young men followed, with long wooden-handled whips; then the farmers' girls, old and young; and the matrons, with their infants in their arms, and grave-looking fathers; and finally the aged and infirm, some with one crutch, some with two; and perhaps my readers will expect me to mention the minister last, as bringing up the rear; but there was nothing in the dress or appearance of those that officiated in this solitary sanctuary to distinguish them from the rest.

After nearly all had come out, Gilbert came to the door to look for his mother.

"Mother," said he, when she appeared, "we can not go home over the snow."

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Gilbert and his mother have to go home by the road.

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"Why not?" said his mother.

"Oh, it won't bear; it slumps. I stepped on it, and went down to there," said he, placing his hand horizontally, with the edge of it upon his thigh.

"The sun has softened it, I suppose. Well, we must go 'round."

The sleighs came up to the door one after another, and having received their loads, drove off in various directions, and when the way was a little cleared, Gilbert and his mother followed on toward the Corner.

After walking slowly along for half a mile, descending by a winding road, with farms, and now and then a piece of woods on each side, they at length began to approach the pond. The great sheet of ice was spread out in the valley, bordered by wooded shores, and indented with deep bays and projecting headlands. At one time, when they were in a pleasant part of the road, Gilbert observed that his mother was looking very intently at a farm-house at a little distance on the right. It was partly concealed by clumps of trees which stood between it and the main road, but Gilbert could see a part of the house, and one end of the barn, and a small orchard of thrifty-looking trees extending beyond the house toward the pond.

"What are you looking at, mother?" said Gilbert.

"I am looking at that farm," said she, walking up at the same time to the entrance of the private road, which turned off through a great gate toward it. "How the orchard has grown! We used to live there, Gilbert."

"We!" said Gilbert, with surprise. "Did we ever live there? When?"

"When your father was alive," said she. "*He* set out those trees." Then, in a musing manner, as if speaking to herself, "I remember the day; it seems as if it was but yesterday."

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Former dwelling of Gilbert's parents.

Plan for recovering possession of it.

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"How long ago was it?" said Gilbert.

"Let us see," said she. "You were three years old that spring—it must be eight or nine years ago."

"I wish we lived there now; it is a great deal pleasanter than our old log house," said he, with a tone of great contempt.

His mother was silent. She gazed upon the dwelling with many sad recollections forcing themselves upon her mind, and then began slowly to walk along, continually turning her head to get new views of the little group of buildings, which were afforded by openings through the trees.

"Mother," said Gilbert, "why don't you buy that house? I wish you would."

"Oh, I have not got money enough, Gilbert."

"How much money have you got?"

"Not a great deal."

"Well, you might buy it, and pay by-and-by, when you get more money."

"But how shall I get the money by-and-by?" said she.

"Oh, you can earn it; besides, I will work hard and help you."

As he said this, Gilbert ran off to look down into a brook which here passed under the road. He leaned upon the railing of the little bridge, and his mother walked on and ascended the hill beyond. She began seriously to entertain the question whether it would be possible for her in any way to regain possession of her early home. She was considering how much she had laid up annually for two or three years past, and wishing that Gilbert was only a little bigger and more industrious, when she reached the top of the hill. Here she stopped and turned round, partly to wait for Gilbert, and partly to take another view of their lost farm. She then thought that she had better not be forming any

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Gilbert has a Bible lesson to learn.

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of her plans of business on the Sabbath, if she expected God's blessing upon them, and dismissed the whole subject from her mind, determined to bring it up for full consideration the next day, at her spinning-wheel.

When they reached home, she sent Gilbert out to do his work while she prepared supper, for it was by this time nearly sundown. As they were seated at the table, she told him that she was going to have him study a lesson after supper.

"In what?" said Gilbert.

"In the Testament. I have been forming a plan. You shall first read half a chapter in John, which is the easiest reading, they say, and I will explain it to you and ask you questions; after that I will give you two of the best of the verses to learn by heart."

"I don't like to learn by heart, mother," said Gilbert, in an impatient tone.

"I know it, Gilbert, but it is best for you to do it, notwithstanding. I am going to have you do *what is best*, after this. I have let you do only *what you like* too long."

There was something in the quiet and gentle, yet steady air with which his mother said this, that was new to Gilbert, and impressed him with the idea that she was more in earnest than usual. He was a little ill-humored at first, but he soon became interested in his reading, and he was pleased with being able to answer the questions which his mother put to him; so that by the time the reading was finished, he began to like the plan of a Bible lesson on Sunday very much, and taking the book in his hand, he sat down on the hearth, at the side of the fire, with his back to the chimney, so as to bring the light of the fire upon the page, and began to commit his verses to memory. In half an hour he came to his mother and recited his lesson.

The next morning, his mother, stimulated by her half-



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Gilbert resolves to co-operate with his mother.

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formed scheme of attempting to regain her long-lost home, rose earlier than usual, awoke Gilbert, and he, catching by sympathy her spirit, came down and took hold zealously of his morning duties. She was pleased and happy, and began to hope that the struggle she had anticipated with her boy was to be spared her. But the fact is that children are generally ready enough to *begin* any new course of moral regimen which their parents may undertake in real earnest. They seem to catch, in some degree, the spirit of resolution and energy which they witness, and then there is the charm of novelty. Hence it follows that in carrying through any reform in the habits of children or in the regulation of a family, the struggle is not to be expected in the outset. It comes with the *ebb* of interest and novelty, after the ardor of the first impulse is gone, and old habits begin to reassert their supremacy.

Gilbert went on very well for several days. In the mornings he went out in the woods with a large hand-sled and a hatchet, and brought in loads of dry sticks to increase his mother's stock of fuel. In the afternoons he worked at the house with his mother.

In the mean time she made her calculations and inquiries in respect to the house. She had heard before that it was for sale, and she ascertained that this report was true. The present possessor was a very good man in a moral point of view, but indolent and inefficient; and he had been drifting down the stream for some time, and was now under the necessity of selling his place. Our heroine's calculations in respect to the possibility of her being able to be the purchaser, too, were not so unfavorable as she expected. There was her present house and farm, worth, as she thought, full one half of the other, for there was a great deal more land. Then she had quite a little sum laid by, in notes on interest and in money, all safe in a little tin

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His mother goes to inquire about the house.Familiar scenes.

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box, in the keeping of a farmer down in the valley. This, she thought, from a rough calculation, would be enough for half of the remainder. Then, for the other quarter, she thought she might gradually work that off, with the help of Gilbert and the blessing of God.

One day, when she was down at the Corner, she concluded, with great fear and trembling, to go and see the present owner of the house, and ascertain exactly how the case stood. It was the middle of the afternoon, and as she walked slowly up toward the house, she almost expected that he would be away at his work. She would, however, at any rate, have an opportunity to see the house again, and this was a great point. She walked slowly along the little avenue, looking at every object, and building bright castles in the air, and at length gave a gentle knock at the front door. "Come in," was the answer from the room; and she opened the door.

The house consisted of two good rooms, with a loft above. The door opened at once into the larger one, and as the visitor entered it, a thousand recollections and associations crowded at once upon her mind. There was the chimney corner where she had spent the first years of her married life, and the great fire-place, with its crane and mantle-piece unchanged. The window looking out upon the mowing-lot, the back door, and even the poles over head, suspended from the ceiling, were the same.

In the corner which was formerly occupied by her spinning-wheel sat a middle-aged man, in a lounging attitude, with his hat upon his head, and his thumbs in his waist-coat pockets. He was a good man in the main, honest, benevolent, and kind, but inefficient and inactive. In fact, indolence was his besetting sin, and had been his temporal ruin. And yet he was perfectly self-satisfied and self-contented, for he considered all his improvidence and inactiv-

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Interview with the owner of the house.

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ity as only a praiseworthy habit of trusting in God. His losses and calamities, resulting almost altogether from want of industry or good management, he called mysterious providences, and though he was dejected and unhappy, yet he was not dissatisfied with himself.

He invited his visitor to walk in and take a seat, without, however, changing his position. She began to tell him that she understood he wished to sell his farm, and they entered into conversation about it. Presently his wife came in from the other room. She sat down near a window, and occupied herself with looking at the stranger. A great boy, with his hat upon his head, and a long goadstick in his hand, sauntered in soon after, and followed his mother's example. The conversation went on, however, without any interruption from these causes, and the visitor learned that the man wished to sell his house, and had no objection to take her farm in part pay, as he must have some farm to go to, of newer land than this. "I have had rather a hard time of it," said he, by way of excusing himself for being obliged to sell his house; "we have been sick a good deal, and have lost a good deal of stock in these hard winters. But I don't complain; it is all for the best, I know."

She asked him what kind of payment he would require for the balance, and he replied that he must have the rest in money. "In fact," said he, "the place is mortgaged to Squire Wilton, and I want to sell it so as to raise the money to pay off that mortgage, and buy me another cheaper farm, if I can. I have been getting behindhand for a long time, and he lent me the money to pay up every thing with, and took a mortgage. He is a fine man; he has done every thing to help me, Squire Wilton has."

The necessity of raising the money for the whole of the balance seemed at first to put an end to the mother's hopes,

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Conversation in the evening about buying the house.Gilbert's promises.

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though she had the good sense not to say so. The man said that he had nearly given up the idea of selling his house before the next season, and as Squire Wilton was willing to wait, he should probably not sell till fall, but that some time in the course of the spring or summer he would come and look at his visitor's farm, and see whether they could trade.

She walked slowly home, turning round many a time as she moved out toward the main road, so as to get a glimpse of the premises from every new position and point of view. She revolved in her mind the possibility of raising the money in any way, and was calculating how much her own and Gilbert's united industry might be made to produce in the course of the coming season, when she arrived at her own door.

That evening, while she was busy at her spinning-wheel, and Gilbert sat upon the broad hearth with his feet out toward the fire, she told him of the result of the interview, and of the possibility there was of their being able to return to their old home. Gilbert took hold of the plan with all zeal. His vanity was gratified with the idea that his help was of so much consequence as his mother seemed to represent. Then there was a greatness in the very nature of the enterprise, that filled his mind with a sense of dignity: it was buying a farm!

"Yes, mother," said he, looking up from the fire, his face beaming with enthusiasm, "yes, mother, I'll help; we'll soon get the money." Poor boy! he had not yet learned the difference between the zeal and ardor inspired by the anticipation of a great achievement, and the patient perseverance by which success must be won.

For a few days Gilbert remembered his resolution, and worked industriously. He at first felt somewhat discouraged in thinking that his work did not produce any money;

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 Gilbert does not persevere.

 Effects of good government.
 

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but then his mother reassured him by explaining that all that he did about the house saved her time, and thus really helped to swell the amount of their funds. This stimulus, however, did not last long ; habits are not to be broken up at once, by a single resolution, any more than character. Gilbert gradually relapsed. He would go off to play, and leave his wood-chopping until the stock which had been cut and split was nearly exhausted. He let the barn and yard get out of order, and two or three times he got asleep in the corner before his wood was brought in for the night. His mother had given up the idea of winning him to fidelity by mere fondness and indulgence, and she insisted always upon his doing his work to the full, however late it might be. When she first observed his gradually increasing remissness, it pained and discouraged her ; but in her hours of communion with God and prayer for her son, she saw very clearly that *her* duty was plain, namely, to keep a firm, steady, and yet gentle pressure upon him, by means of commendation when he did right, and suitable deprivations and punishments when he did wrong, and to leave the final result in the hands of God, without giving herself any anxiety or uneasiness about it.

There is something mysterious in the effect of firm government on the affections of the subjects of it. That steady restraint should have a very salutary effect on the formation of character is not very strange, but there is a mystery in its power to awaken love. Children who have been brought up under the closest restraints, if properly exercised, become not only the best men, but are the most affectionate children. Even severe punishment, when administered without anger, and from an honest sense of duty, is followed, not by resentment, or sullenness, or alienated affection, but by an hour of subdued and softened emotions ; and the sufferer, even before his sufferings are fairly over, clings to the

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Gilbert begins to love his mother.The milking-stool.

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hand which inflicted them with more confidence and affection than ever.

At any rate, however philosophers may explain these moral effects, Gilbert's mother was surprised to see some very distinct signs of gratitude and love soon manifesting themselves in her son. She had expected that her new system of steady coercion and restraint would have completely chilled and destroyed what little regard he had for her, but she was astonished to find that the effect was apparently the reverse. He began to speak more respectfully and affectionately. He showed more and more regard for her wishes—was eager to get up in the morning, and to build the fire for her; and at length, one sunny day, early in April, as she went out into the yard, she saw him hastily hiding something behind a log in the wood-pile, as if to keep it from her sight.

"Gilbert," said she, "I hope you are not doing any thing wrong."

"No, mother," he replied, pulling out his work again, "it is not any thing wrong."

It was a small piece of board, with a handle in one end, and two legs fixed into two of the corners, and two other legs ready to go into the others. "It is only a milking-stool that I was trying to make for you, mother, so that you shouldn't have so much trouble



GILBERT MAKING A STOOL.

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Value of the gift.The rose-bush coming to life.

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every night to drive the cow up to the log. I did not want you to see it until it was done." He fixed in the other legs, but it was a rude specimen of art, after all; and yet, if the worth of a present depends upon the pleasure it gives to the receiver, this milking-stool was a more valuable gift than any diamond. Besides, it was intrinsically useful, for it served an excellent purpose for a long time after that, as a milking-stool in the yard, and as Gilbert's cricket in the corner.

In the mean time the snow gradually wasted away, the sun rose higher and higher every noon, and bare patches of ground began to appear. One evening, just before supper-time, Gilbert, who had been at the barn making all snug for the night, came running in with a face full of good news, and said,

"Mother, mother, my little rose-bush has come in sight, and it is all full of little buds. Come and see."

We ought to have premised that the ornamental shrubbery of this country seat consisted of one rose-bush, which had been given to Gilbert the spring before by a friend at the Corner. It was a "real English rose-bush," as Gilbert said when he brought it home; the epithet English, when applied to shrub, fruit, or flower in America, being the common mode of denoting extraordinary size and beauty. The snows about the rose-bush had been gradually thawing away, and Gilbert had just discovered its emancipation.

His mother was just then drawing away the hot embers and coals from under the forestick, but she laid down her shovel, and went out to look at the shrub. True enough, it was in full view, with the little leaf-buds, which had been prepared in the preceding autumn, all ready for their approaching expansion.

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Gilbert's mother proposes a new plan to him.

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"Only see, mother, these buds have grown already. The leaves will all come out pretty soon."

"It looks well, Gilbert, I think myself. You will have some roses on it this year."

So saying, she returned into the house, and Gilbert followed.

"How soon will it be time to plow, mother?" said he, watching her motions as she brought a bowl of potatoes and dropped them one by one into the bed she had made for them.

"Oh, not this six weeks yet," said she.

"Six weeks!" said Gilbert, with a tone of disappointment; "oh, I long to have the time come when I can work in the garden."

"I have been thinking of another plan for this summer, Gilbert," said she, as she covered up her potatoes in the hot ashes.

"What is it?"

"For you to live *out* this summer."

"Live out, mother!" said Gilbert, with surprise, "and leave you all alone!"

"I should be lonely enough, I know; but then, if you should get a good place, and were an industrious, good boy, you might earn a good deal of money, and we could get our new house sooner."

Gilbert was sitting on his cricket, and he looked into the fire musing in silence. Presently he turned again to his mother, who was busy at the table, and asked,

"How soon shall I go, mother?"

"Oh, I don't know. I have not thought much about it; only the plan came into my head yesterday, as I was spinning. It will be very hard for me to let you go away."

During the three quarters of an hour while the potatoes were roasting, and the half hour while they were eating



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Gilbert's mother finds it hard to resolve to send him out.

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them, this plan, in all its details, was the subject of conversation. Places were talked of; the wages, the arrangements necessary to be made at home on account of Gilbert's absence, and the best time for beginning and ending the proposed service, were all discussed. Gilbert seemed, on the whole, pleased with the idea, but the mother's heart rather failed. She thought of her long months of loneliness, hearing Gilbert's joyous voice no more, working day after day, and retiring to rest night after night, in utter solitude; and then the idea that Gilbert might be discontented and unhappy in his new sphere, or be harshly treated, or injured by hard work. "No," said she to herself, at last, as they rose from the table, "no; I'd rather work the harder and the longer myself to raise the money."

A plan dismissed, however resolutely, from the influence of mere feeling, is very likely to return again and demand a new hearing. At any rate, it was so with this project, for the parties found themselves continually recurring to it for several successive days, and they came at length *almost* to the conclusion that Gilbert had better go.

While the question was in this state, Gilbert one day, when he came home from some errand at the Corner, brought back word that a farmer who lived about two miles distant, on the Bristol road, wished to hire a boy next summer. This intelligence determined his mother to go, at least, and see what sort of an arrangement could be made. She accordingly dressed her boy in her neatest manner, and immediately after breakfast one morning they set out on the expedition.

It was a pleasant frosty morning in spring. The snow had in a great measure disappeared from the roads, but they were icy still, and great patches of snow lay along under the fences and walls, and in the fields and woods. Gilbert and his mother walked along on the hard and smooth sur-

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Gilbert and his mother go to see the farmer.

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face of the road, or on the consolidated snow by the side of it, with a warm sun pouring its beams upon them. The atmospherical influences of the morning were bright and cheerful in the extreme, and yet it was with rather saddened feelings that they set out upon the walk. Gilbert felt some interest and animation in looking forward to the great crisis in his history which seemed to be approaching, and yet he could not think of leaving his mother in such utter solitude without a sigh; and she herself was filled with pensive feelings at thinking that she was going to send her boy away, when he seemed just beginning to be a dutiful and affectionate son. Still, it seemed to be best in the end, and she went resolutely on.

They had obtained the name of the farmer, and had stopped at the Corner to learn precisely where he lived; and now they were rapidly drawing near to the place, when Gilbert saw a house on before them at a short distance, and said he thought that that must be the house.

"No," said his mother, "that is on the left hand; *his* house is on the right."

"Then it is a great deal more than two miles," said he, "I know."

"Oh, be patient," said his mother. "See! there comes a sleigh."

Gilbert looked on before, and saw a man in a sleigh driving slowly along, with one runner on the snow, by the side of the road, wherever he could find any that was accessible.

"Hard sledding," said Gilbert.

"Yes; he has been to mill, I suppose," said his mother, looking at the ends of meal-bags which appeared on each side of the sleigh.

There was a very slippery place in the road where they met the sleigh. The water which had oozed out of the ground had frozen during the night in a sheet of ice sloping

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Gilbert and his mother pass a stranger on the road. The stranger calls Gilbert.

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off to one side in such a way as to make it difficult for foot, passengers, and a little dangerous for loaded sleighs. Gilbert and his mother were on the upper side of the road, the latter solely occupied in choosing her steps. Gilbert, more at ease on the ice, walked along carelessly, looking at the man. The man himself got out of the sleigh and walked behind it, with his hands upon the corners of the back, to keep it from sliding off the road. He cast only a momentary glance at Gilbert and his mother as he passed.

"Mother," said Gilbert, in an eager whisper, as soon as he had gone by, "did you see who that was?"

"No; who was it?"

"It is the man that lives in our new house."

"Is it?" said she, turning her head round an instant.

"Yes," said Gilbert, turning round so as to face the other way, and walking backward. "Yes, I am sure it is."

Gilbert was right. The unlucky man, habitually indolent and dilatory, was always behindhand; his seed was always in too late, and winter always set in too early. He never got time to cut his clover till it had run to seed, nor to haul his wood or get his grain to the mill until the ground was bare.

"He has got into his sleigh again," continued Gilbert, still walking backward; "now he is looking round at us; he has stopped his sleigh. Mother, he is beckoning to me. Shall I go and see what he wants?"

His mother said "Yes," and turned round. The man had by this time gone some distance, but he was standing up in the sleigh, and was waiting for Gilbert to come up.

"Gilbert," said he, "is that you?"

"Yes, sir," said Gilbert.

"That is your mother with you, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

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Gilbert learns some bad news.His mother is much troubled.

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"Well, won't you tell her that she need not trouble herself any more about the house? Squire Wilton is going to take it himself."

"*What!*" said Gilbert, with astonishment.

"Your mother will understand. Tell her I have settled with Squire Wilton, and he has concluded to take the house himself."

Gilbert was thunderstruck. He had, however, presence of mind to ask whether Squire Wilton would be willing to sell it.

"No," said the man, "I believe he has bought it for a friend of his."

The horse had begun to move on before these last words were spoken, and then his driver turned round, and the equipage moved slowly away. Gilbert stood fixed to the spot, gazing after the man, until his mother called him. He turned round and came toward her with a countenance expressive of bewildered disappointment. He came up to her, and with a faltering voice delivered the message.

"*Did* he say so?" said she, mournfully.

"Yes, mother."

They looked at one another some time in silence, and then she led the way to the side of the road, and sat down upon a log lying there, the mother lost in thought, and the son wondering what was now to be done.

"Did he say he had actually *sold* the farm to Squire Wilton?"

"Yes, I am sure he did."

"But perhaps Squire Wilton will sell it again to me."

"No, mother; he said Squire Wilton wanted it for a friend of his."

"Did he?" said she, with a mournful expression of disappointment; "then it is all over with our plan, and we may as well go home again."

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Gilbert and his mother go home disconsolate.She resolves not to repine.

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"And I not go out to work this summer?" said Gilbert, looking up inquiringly.

"No," said his mother; "I have no idea of losing the farm and you too. No; we will go home again as fast as we can. I am very glad we found this out before you had engaged your place."

So saying, they wended their way slowly home again. It was a heavy disappointment to both. Gilbert had felt the eager interest with which youth always anticipates going out into the world—for he considered the proposed change in his condition as thus going out—and he had looked forward to a vast variety of incidents and adventures in his new sphere of duty, so that he was disappointed. To his mother the tidings came as a heavy blow. Her busy imagination had conjured up so many images of prosperity and happiness in the prospect of again taking possession of her early home, that there was a great falling of high and splendid superstructures when the whole foundation was thus suddenly undermined. Her own present dwelling, which she had always considered so comfortable and pleasant, now looked desolate and gloomy. She could not endure the thoughts of returning to it. She walked along, her heart filled with feelings of murmuring and discontent. In fact, she surprised Gilbert by uttering various expressions of disappointment and vexation.

At length her excited feelings seemed to subside, and she walked up the long and winding road which ascended their valley in silence, Gilbert a little behind.

Just before they reached the house, she turned round and beckoned Gilbert to come toward her.

"Gilbert," said she, "I have spoken wrong and felt wrong about this business, and I am sorry for it. I have given myself up to God, and I wish him to direct every thing for us, and since he has decided that we can not

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Gilbert proposes to make some maple candy.

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have our old house again, I have no doubt it is all for the best."

"I don't see how it can be all for the best, mother, I am sure."

"I believe it is, though I was vexed and impatient about it at first. We shall see it so one of these days, I do not doubt. And now we will come back to our old home pleasantly, and be contented and happy here. I have a greater treasure than that house and farm would be."

"What is it, mother?"

"You, Gilbert, since you have grown a dutiful and obedient boy. So now can't we think of something pleasant to do this evening, to put the thoughts of this disappointment out of our heads?"

"I don't know, mother," said Gilbert, hesitatingly, "what we can do, unless we make some maple candy."

"Maple candy—yes, that will be just the thing—only it will take too long for the sap to run. You could not get enough by to-night."

"Oh," said Gilbert, eagerly, "Israel will give me sap enough—or sirup, if I want it. I can go down there this afternoon, and get a pail full of sirup, and then we shall not have to boil it so long."

With truly philosophical views of the proper mode of getting over disappointments, this plan was adopted, and it was agreed that in the afternoon Gilbert was to go to the sugar-bush to claim the promised sirup.

Accordingly, about the middle of the afternoon, Gilbert came to the door with his hand-sled, and his mother corded upon it a small pail with a cloth and string within, and Gilbert set off, dragging it sometimes over the mud, and sometimes over wet ice and snow. He came to the farmhouse where Israel lived, and going through the barn-yard, ascended gradually by a narrow cart-path through the

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Gilbert goes to get the sirup.The sugar-bush.

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woods until he came to a small opening. Troughs and buckets were under the trees, and in the middle of the little opening was a fire between some great stones, on which was resting a monstrous iron kettle full of the boiling sirup. Two or three men and boys were continually moving round and round the kettle, forward and backward, now this way and now that, chased by the smoke, which always seems, in such a case, to puff out in the direction where there are the greatest number of noses and eyes, and when they move it instinctively follows.

Gilbert ran up to the company, and was welcomed by Israel, who stood there with the others. One was stirring the sirup with a great iron ladle ; others had wooden dippers and great spoons, with which they were continually taking out a small quantity to cool in the snow, in order to test its progress. They handed Gilbert a spoon, that he might form his opinion on the state of the evaporation. Gilbert moved around the fire with the rest, to and fro, alternately filling his eyes with smoke and his mouth with sugar, and at length asked Israel to give him his sirup. He brought up the sled to the fire, and took the cloth and the string out of the pail. Israel then filled the pail nearly full with a great ladle, and tied the cloth strongly over the top. He then himself went to a yoke of steers, which were standing patient and unconcerned at a little distance, attached to a small sled with a barrel upon it, and calling another young man to go with him, he took up the goad-stick which was lying across the necks of the animals, and started along for a fresh supply of sap. Gilbert, after one more examination of the state of the sirup in the kettle, took up the string of his sled, and moved slowly along toward home.

Just after dark that evening, Gilbert came into the house with a long stick in his hands, which he had split from a

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Gilbert makes a ladle-handle.Somebody coming.

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board. He seated himself upon his little cricket, took out his jack-knife from his pocket, and began shaving the stick smooth by drawing it along his knee. His mother was at work at her spinning-wheel in the corner, just finishing her task for the day. An iron kettle was placed upon three small stones in front of the fire, with hot embers and ashes under it, an amber-colored froth covering the surface of the sirup within.

"What are you going to do with that, Gilbert?" said his mother.

"This is my ladle-handle," said Gilbert.

"What have you got it so long for?"

"Oh, so that we need not burn our faces and hands," said he, as he went on tying an iron spoon upon the end of the stick.

He fastened the spoon on obliquely, so that it might more conveniently reach down into the kettle, and it operated admirably. He sat in one corner, sheltered from the radiation of the fire, and gently stirred the sirup while his mother finished the labors of the day, and put back and arranged the simple furniture. At length all was ready. The spinning-wheel had retreated to its corner; the table was placed before the fire; Gilbert, after innumerable tastings and trials, pronounced the candy done, and his mother was just pouring it out upon the surface of a mass of snow placed in a great earthen pan upon the table, when the footsteps of a horse trotting up the road toward the house were heard.

"Hark!" said Gilbert, "there is somebody going by."

"No," said his mother, an instant afterward, as she perceived that the trot broke into a walk, and turned up toward the house, "it is somebody coming here. Go and open the door, Gilbert."

Gilbert took the pitch-pine torch from its crevice in the



The torch.

Menstrous shadow.

The stranger comes in.

chimney, and went to the door. He saw a man fastening a saddle-horse to the log fence by the side of the yard. The light of the torch flashed over the yard, and Gilbert would have been able to see plainly the form and figure of the man, if his attention had not been engrossed by the black shadows of the horse's legs, which stretched away to an enormous length along the yard, and ended in a monstrous mass of shade, undefined and flickering against the fence across the road. While he was gazing at this extraordinary phenomenon, the stranger came up to the door, and his mother, as soon as she caught a glimpse of his features, recognized at once the countenance of her former evening visitor.

She rose at once to welcome him, and gave him a seat by the fire.

The stranger was welcomed as a friend, and he seemed inclined to make himself at home. He took a great interest in the manipulation of the candy, talking all the time in a cheerful and entertaining manner. In fact, half an hour passed away so pleasantly that both Gilbert and his mother had almost forgotten their disappointment, though the bitterness of it would undoubtedly have returned again and again to the mother's mind for many a week and month to come.

After sitting thus for half an hour, the stranger drew out his watch and said,

"But I am making too long a visit. I came to see you on a little business. You have been thinking, I understand," he continued, while he was putting on his wrapper, "of purchasing back the farm down by the pond, where you used to live."

"Yes, sir, I did think of it, but I have given it up now."

"Have you?" said the stranger, with a tone of surprise; "why so?"

Picture of the candy-making.

An explanation.



THE VISIT.

"Because it is sold, and we can not have it."

"Sold!" said he, arresting himself and standing fixed, with one arm in the sleeve of the wrapper. "I think that can hardly be. Who told you?"

"Oh yes it is. Mr. James himself said so this morning. He said that Squire Wilton had concluded to buy it for a friend of his."

"Oh!" said the stranger, with a sudden expression of relief on his countenance, slipping, at the same time, the other arm into its sleeve, "Mr. James is a little mistaken there."

She looked inquiringly at the stranger, with a countenance expressing mingled curiosity, hope, and fear.

"Squire Wilton requested him," continued the visitor, "not to make any sale till he heard from him, as he *was thinking* of taking it for a friend of his."

"Was that all?" said she.

"Yes; and then, besides, if Squire Wilton had actually

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Mr. Wilton's plan.

His unostentatious generosity.

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engaged it for his friend, that need not have troubled you."

"How so?" said she.

"Why, to come to the point at once, I am Squire Wilton, and you are the friend I was looking out for."

The annunciation conveyed to the mother's mind no distinct idea how, after all, her wishes were to be fulfilled; but, without stopping to look at details, a swelling tide of joy and gladness filled her soul, and her heart bounded upward, as by a spring, in gratitude and praise. But, except a certain beaming of the eye, there was no outward sign of emotion.

The stranger explained. He said he had heard of the change which had taken place in her, and had been told of her plan for repurchasing her former home, and he had accordingly requested the owner of the house to suspend his movements until he could confer with her.

Mr. Wilton's only object was to appoint a time for the meeting of all the parties concerned to settle the details, and so it was agreed that she should go down to the house the next morning. She was then about expressing her gratitude to him, but he stopped her by saying she misunderstood the business altogether. It was as much a convenience to him to find a purchaser as it was for her to find a farm. "It is an accommodation to Mr. James, to myself, and to you, but none of us are under any particular obligations to the other. It is a business transaction altogether."

"And, besides," he added, with his hand upon the door and a smile upon his countenance, "I will frankly say, though perhaps it is not very polite, that even if I intended to do a deed of charity, I should do it to some other person. I do not consider you an object to exercise charity upon at all."

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Gilbert watches for his mother.They go back to the old farm.

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The next day, toward noon, Gilbert turned every log of wood which he rolled down from the pile to be chopped in such a manner that, while at his work, he could see down the road, so as to catch the first glimpse of his mother on her return. At length she came in sight. Down went the axe ; Gilbert leaped over his log, and ran down the road to meet her.

"It's all settled," said she, with a joyous face, as he ran up to her.

"Is it? And are we to have the house?"

"Yes; and to move immediately."

A week from this morning, Gilbert and his mother were quietly settled in their new home.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE UNBELIEVER.

IF half a dozen buildings are enough to make a village, then there were two villages under old Hoaryhead's direct inspection—"The Corner," and "The Falls." The Corner was near the base of the mountain, at the intersection of two roads, which, winding up upon the opposite shores, crossed and diverged again at the head of the pond. The Falls was a small water-power near the outlet of the pond, where there was a mill, a blacksmith's shop, and a small store. The store was kept by a hard-faced looking man, who went by the name of Shubael, sometimes with and sometimes without the prefix "Colonel." He was an elderly man, quiet and cool in his air and manner, and with a countenance placid but heartless in its expression. There was a certain quick motion of his eye which showed that he was shrewd and observant. His store had a bad name, and yet no one seemed to know exactly why. Colonel Shubael himself, too, was the object of a sort of mysterious fear and even hate, and yet no one had any thing very decided to say against him. He did not join in the coarse and violent language which was often heard from the vicious loungers about his door; the most that he did was to look up with a smile and a wink of approbation or encouragement. He was believed to be a perfectly honest man too, so far as *legal* honesty is concerned. No man understood the law better than he, or the sound policy of keeping on good terms with it.

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Situation of the store.	Mr. Shubael's military title.	Description of the store.
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The store was situated in a romantic and beautiful spot, though of course it was somewhat wild. The forest and rising hills were behind it. Before it was the stream, with picturesque banks, steep and wooded, and a few rods below there was a rustic bridge, and a mill on the other side of it. Opposite the bridge, on the same side of the road with the store, was the colonel's house. It was a plain, one-story, unpainted farm-house; but the spacious sheds, and barns, and great wood-piles indicated that the nest was pretty comfortably feathered. In fact, money was the colonel's idol, and every thing else had been made, during a pretty long life, to yield to the worship of it. He had once been in the line of military promotion, having been chosen captain of the straggling band which used to parade in May on the field between his house and store; but he soon resigned the command, as he found it attended with sundry little expenses which he thought it better to save. He, however, retained his military title, being called colonel, after that, all his days, his customers, and the loungers about his store, having had the good nature not to be too particular in remembering the precise rank to which their hero had actually attained. Besides, it was a sort of credit to the town to have a colonel in it, or, rather, a man called colonel.

Mr. Shubael's store was small, but it had a snug, social air within. It was nearly square, with a door in the middle of the front. A counter extended along one side and across the back of the store, and on the remaining side, near the corner next the road, was a fire-place, with a barrel of oil and another of cider near it, to keep them from freezing. There were other barrels and hogsheds, less likely to freeze, behind the counter, against the back side of the room. A door, between two great black hogsheds mounted on sticks, opened to a dark-looking back room behind.

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 "Stage" coming in.

The post-office arrangements.

 Bridge.
 

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Tubs, baskets, bundles of whip-handles, hoes and shovels, barrels, kegs of nails, and iron-ware, encumbered the floor, leaving only narrow passages along in front of the counters and toward the fire. There was a little area near the fire also unoccupied, and two or three basket-bottomed chairs, with high wooden backs, stood there. A half keg of closely-packed tobacco was near, with one loose fig and an old hatchet lying on it; and there was an ink-bottle, with a blackened and dried-up quill thrust through the cork, in the chimney corner.

But I am describing the store in a winter's day, while this story is meant to open in the summer, between haying and harvesting. The fire was dead, and a great tin fender concealed the ashes and brands. The chairs were out before the door, and two or three men were sitting and standing there, waiting for the "stage." It was a calm and pleasant afternoon; the forests around were in their best dress, and the view up the pond was picturesque in the highest degree. But the company paid little attention to the beauty of the scenery. They were looking out for the stage.

Mr. Shubael was the post-master. A little high paling, in a corner of his store, at the end of the counter opposite the fire, was the post-office. The mail came once a week, bringing a few newspapers and sometimes some letters. The company which was collected on this occasion were not interested so much in the contents of the mail, as in a new team of horses, and larger coach, which was that day, for the first time, to be put upon the road. They were looking off beyond the bridge, where the road could be seen for a considerable distance winding around a hill, and talking with noisy laughter about various subjects that came up.

By the side of the door, outside, his chair tipped back against the side of the building, and his feet resting upon

M'Donner.

Mystery.

His ill-humor.

Shubael.

a bar which passed along between two posts placed there for fastening horses, sat a tall, dark-complexioned man, with black bushy hair and eyebrows, and an intelligent but sinister expression of countenance. They called him M'Donner.

M'Donner seemed inclined to be silent. He allowed the others to talk and laugh, paying himself apparently little attention. They, however, often appealed to him, and though he seemed reluctant to be drawn out into conversation, yet, when he did speak, it was in language so rough and decided in its wickedness as evidently to give him the pre-eminence in the company. They listened attentively to his dictatorial opinions, and shouted long and loud at his blasphemous wit. And yet he seemed to keep them aloof in some degree. There was a chasm of some sort, a kind of reserve and holding back, which, to a cautious observer of mankind, would have been noticed as a dark omen. His reserve was, in fact, the wary caution of crime.

"M'Donner," said one of the men, leaning upon the bar before him, "it is a great poser to me how you contrive to pick up a living. Your farm, there, don't produce enough to winter over a red squirrel. Then you're off, nobody knows where, half of the time. I'll lay ten to one there's some foul play."

M'Donner muttered some inarticulate ejaculation in reply, and then said, taking down his feet, and drawing himself up in his chair, "I can tell you what would be a very pretty way for you to get a living."

"How?" rejoined his interrogator.

"By attending to your own business, and leaving me to manage mine."

The company tried to receive this with a laugh, but the attempt was a failure. Shubael was standing at this moment at the door. He interposed, to prevent ill will.



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Terry coming with an axe.Shubael's account of the purchase of it.

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"Come, come," said he, "no sparring. Who's that coming down the road?"

The men turned their eyes in the direction of the road, where they were expecting to see the stage, and they saw a man walking along with something on his shoulder.

"It's Terry, as I am alive," said Shubael, with a sort of a nod and a wink, "bringing back his axe; just as I said—exactly."

The men asked him what he meant; but he turned away with a knowing look, and disappeared in the store. Part of the group at the door continued to look at Terry, and part called the colonel to come back and tell the story. Among the rest, M'Donner twisted his long body around so as to look in at the door, and called out,

"Colonel Shubael, come back here and tell us all about Terry's axe. You've been coming over the poor fellow in some of your sly ways, I know. Tell us all about it."

Shubael came up to the door again, at this, with a look of hard, selfish satisfaction on his face, and told his story thus:

"Terry got a job the other day which brought him in a little money, and he came here and wanted to get an axe. 'Shubael,' says he, 'I want a first-rate axe, and I am able to pay for it.' 'Well,' says I, 'Terry, I have got some of Darlington's best, warranted.' 'What's the price?' said he. 'A dollar and a half,' says I."

"Oh, Shubael," cried out one of the by-standers, "you offered to sell me one for a dollar and a quarter. That's a fine way to work poor Terry." Here there was a shout of laughter, to which, however, Shubael himself contributed rather faintly, and then proceeded.

"Why, I knew he would not keep the axe a week, and so it was not much matter what he paid for it."

"A very pretty reason, that," said M'Donner, "I declare. I rather guess he did not get his money back in a week."

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Conversation about Terry.M'Donner an unbeliever.

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"I told him a dollar and a half, at any rate," continued Shubael, "and he chose one out, and bought a handle for it, and paid me the money. 'Twas the first time he had bought any thing but spirits at my store for three months. I knew he would not keep it a week, and now he's coming back to get the value of it in spirits, or my name's not Shubael."

"He's stopped," said one of the company; "he is sitting down on a stone to rest, right opposite the burying-ground."

"He ought to be the other side of the fence—six foot under ground," said M'Donner. "He'd lie easier there than he does in his own hovel, I'll engage."

"I don't know," said another, "how easy he'll lie. He has got something to answer for in another world, if all I've heard is true."

"Another world!" said M'Donner, with contempt.

"Mac don't believe in any other world, they say," said Shubael, with a sort of grin; "he is a sad dog. I think it's likely it'll prove good news for him, if it's true."

M'Donner seemed a little uneasy. He moved about on his seat, saying, half aloud, that it would not be such *very bad* news for some other people that he was acquainted with.

On the side of the door opposite to M'Donner's place, a little out of the group of loungers, there had been sitting a young man reading a newspaper. He was dressed more neatly than the rest, though very coarsely. His frame was athletic and strong, and his appearance rustic, though his countenance was frank and intelligent. He looked up from his newspaper at these words, and fixing his eyes on the infidel, said, in a very composed, and yet somewhat respectful manner,

"Don't you believe in another world, Mr. M'Donner?"

"Not I."

The hop-vine.	Its tendrils.	Argument drawn from them.
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"Nor in God?"

"No."

"Where do you suppose this world came from, then?"

"I don't know nor care. It's nothing to me where it came from. I've nothing to do with this *world*," said he, dwelling upon the last word with a tone of contempt.

"I guess you'll find you'll have something to do with another world," said an old man, with a slouched hat over his eyes, which repartee was received by a shout of laughter from most of the company. As soon as it had subsided a little, the young man left his chair and came toward the door with his paper in his hand.

"Mr. M'Donner," said he, "you are a sensible man, and I want to ask you a question. Look here, at this hop-vine."

Here we must interrupt the speaker a moment to say that Shubael, who liked to have things look "sociable," as he called it, about his premises, had put out, from time to time, a few trees and some shrubbery near his store. He thought they would help the sale of the property, if he should ever want to dispose of it. Now there was a hop-vine planted under the post-office window, just beyond the place where M'Donner was sitting. Mr. Shubael had trained it by twine strings up to the window-sill, and thence up the side of the building; and it happened that at this time, one or two shoots were ascending in a spiral of the utmost beauty, winding round and round, and performing as plain an act of *climbing*, by means of a mechanical contrivance, as that of a kitten ascending a tree by her claws.

"Now," said the young man, "look at this hop-vine climbing up the colonel's twine. That looks to me very much as if there was head-work concerned somewhere."

The group crowded up to look at the hop-vine. The long, slender spiral was wound round and round the twine all the way up from the root, putting out its leaves at every

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The world has not always been as it is now.

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joint; and the terminal bud at the top seemed so intent upon mounting up higher, and was looking so exactly in the right direction for the next turn round the twine, that one of the men said it seemed as if it could almost understand you if you should speak to it.

"Now, Mr. M'Donner," said the young man again, "don't you think there must have been some *planning* to contrive the inside of that bud so as to make it work so?"

"Oh, that's the natur' of it," said M'Donner. "It's as natural for a hop-vine to climb as 'tis for you and I to breathe."

The young man smiled, and the other by-standers laughed. They told M'Donner that they thought he was rather "*cornered*;" but he did not seem disposed to submit. So he executed the only manœuvre that is left to a logician who has a good antagonist and a bad cause—that is, he shifted his ground.

"It is all nonsense to believe that this world was made in six days out of nothing."

"How do you suppose it *was* made, then?"

"Why, it was not made at all. It has always been just as it is now."

"Always?"

"Yes, always—from all eternity."

"I don't see how any man can believe that who lives in sight of old Hoaryhead."

"Old Hoaryhead?" said M'Donner; "what has old Hoaryhead to do with it?"

"Why, every winter the frost cracks off the rocks, and the spring rains wash down sand and gravel. Every freshet brings down cart-loads in Colman's brook. All Colman's intervale is *made* by what is washed down from old Hoaryhead and the hills around."

"I don't believe that," said M'Donner.

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Proof of this from the geological phenomena of Hoaryhead.

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"You would believe it if you were to go up on the top of Hoaryhead and look down on the pond. There you would see the brook, and this great intervale spreading all round the mouth of it into the pond ; and it is coming down now every year more and more."

M'Donner disputed this view of the case as well as he could ; but the other by-standers, who were acquainted with different brooks emptying into the pond at various places, recollected that even within forty years the shoals and flats about their mouths had made a perceptible progress, and the evidence was soon irresistible that the pond was gradually filling up by the *debris* washed by brooks and rains down from the neighboring elevations. M'Donner, however, denied that it had any thing to do with the subject.

"It has this to do with it," said the young man ; "if the world had existed as it is now from all eternity, Hoaryhead would have been all crumbled away, and the pond all filled up long before now."

"Nonsense !" said M'Donner ; "the freshets don't bring down any amount to speak of. After a heavy rain, some cart-loads are washed down, you say ; but what are cart-loads ? Old Hoaryhead would not be worn away, at that rate, in a million of years."

"But there are a good many millions of years in all eternity," said his antagonist. "It's slow work, I know, frost and rain leveling the rocks of old Hoaryhead, but then forever is a great while."

"Here comes Terry," said M'Donner. The company looked up, and a thin, dejected, miserable-looking man was just approaching from the bridge. His eye brightened up at seeing such a company before the store door, and his countenance had a certain expression of intelligence. As he came up to the store door, he was hailed in various tones

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Terry comes with his axe.Proposes to return it.

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by the several loungers there, and made the butt of jokes, some coarse and others dull. Terry received them all with a vacant smile, and walked into the store.

"Well, Terry," said Shubael, "how do you make your axe go?"

"It is not a good one," said Terry, "and I want you to take it back."

"What is the matter with it?" said Shubael, taking it from his hand, and at the same time turning a sly glance toward the company, who were looking in at the door to see how Terry's negotiation was to result.

"Is it not good?" said the colonel; "what is the matter with it?"

"Oh, it is too soft. I can't do any thing with it, and you must take it back, as it is warranted," said Terry, pointing to the words, "*Darlington, warranted*," stamped very legibly upon the side.

"Yes, but I don't warrant it; it is Darlington that warrants it. I presume, if you take it to his manufactory, he'll exchange it for you."

Darlington's manufactory was about a hundred and fifty miles off, in another state.

Terry hesitated a minute or two, and then said that he thought the colonel ought to take it back, as he sold it to him for a good axe.

Mr. Shubael seemed very unwilling to do any thing about it. He talked of the trouble and expense of sending the axe back, and finally told the man, winking at the same time to the by-standers, that he would give him a dollar for it, out of the store, and run his chance of selling it or getting it changed.

"Why," said Terry, "that is very hard. I paid a dollar and a half for it, and then there is the handle besides, to say nothing of the putting in."

Picture of Mr. Shubael's store.

He buys back the axe.



MR. SHUBAEL'S STORE.

"But it will cost me a good deal to get it back to Darlington's; and the handle must all come out, to harden it."

Terry at length accepted the offer, took up the amount in spirits and sugar, and left the store, jug in hand. As soon as he had gone, the loungers came in and gave vent to bursts of laughter, which they had contrived to suppress while the bargain was going on, while the colonel, with a smile of self-satisfaction, and a nod and a wink, went round to his desk and began to look into his ledger.

In the mean time, the long-expected stage-coach began to appear in the distant road. The ground gradually descended, and the horses came with great speed. The coach rumbled over the bridge and wheeled up to the post-office door, the driver finding it difficult, apparently, to hold the horses in. They were of a shaggy and rustic breed, but evidently had some spirit.

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Caleb—his account of his horses. M'Donner's connection with the counterfeiters.

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"Well, Caleb," shouted out Colonel Shubael to the driver, as he leaped off of the coach, "how do you get on?"

"Get on?" said Caleb; "I'd rather mow. It's easier work. I never saw such a team—those leaders pulling just as hard as they can pull, all the way. Wish to get out?" continued he, opening the coach door, and addressing the passengers.

"Good team, is it?"

"Yes," said Caleb, "that's the kind; give me the horses you have to hold on to, after all. M'Donner, how d'ye do? Colonel, can you change a five for the girl in the coach? She wants to pay her fare, and I have no small bills."

Before going any farther in our narrative, we must inform our readers that both the colonel and M'Donner were connected with a company of counterfeiters in a distant town. Shubael was too shrewd to have any direct communication with them that should by any possibility implicate him. He had been cautiously sounded on the subject by one of the band whom he had fallen in with at some haunt of dissipation at the annual visit he used to make to the city, to pay his notes and purchase goods. He refused to have any thing to do with the business directly himself; would not communicate with them in writing in any way, nor even verbally with any but the single individual whom he had first seen. He refused to take any of their money, but said perhaps he could find a man who would dispose of some of it. The mode adopted by the gang for the management of their business was to sell the bad money, all ready for circulation, to the utterers, at half price. The colonel knew something of M'Donner—he knew that he was unprincipled and poor. He lived in a miserable cabin, and got his livelihood by plundering timber-lands, and from the proceeds carrying shingles to market. He thought that his retirement, his reserved disposition, his shrewd-



How it was arranged.

Shubael shares the profits.

His cunning.

ness, and his wandering habits, fitted him admirably for the work of circulating the money. He accordingly thought he had a fine opportunity to reap a part of the profits of crime without the danger of being involved in its penalties.

Accordingly, one day, when M'Donner was at his store, and they were talking together about various affairs, he inquired of him when he was going off again with a load of his shingles. M'Donner replied that he was going soon.

"I should think you would take up some more profitable business than that, Mr. M'Donner," said the colonel; "a man with your sense and your business habits might do a great deal better."

"I'd thank ye to tell me how," said M'Donner.

"Oh, there are a thousand ways. There was a man I saw the last time I was in Bristol, who told me he had some speculations in view, in which an enterprising man might do exceedingly well. I don't know what the business was, but from what I know of the man it must be something handsome."

"I suppose it would require some of the ready."

"Why, yes," said Shubael. "But then I have so much confidence in you and him, that I should be willing to advance a little cash, if that should be necessary, and then you could pay over to me half the profits."

M'Donner was at first very much surprised at such a proposal. He thought that the colonel was trying his skill at a hoax, but he was soon satisfied that he was serious.

"How much money would be wanted, do you suppose?" he asked.

"I would advance fifty dollars, just to try the experiment on a small scale. If any thing comes of it, you pay over to me a half. And of course I don't want to hear any thing

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The plan works very successfully.Mr. Shubael's gains.

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about the nature of the business. I'm in regular trade here, you know, and I had better have nothing to do with your speculations."

M'Donner looked steadily into the colonel's face as he said this, and thought he perceived a very slight tendency to wink in his left eye.

"O-ho!" thought he to himself, as he turned toward the fire, and fixed the features of his face in a sort of rigid vacancy, that they might not betray what was passing in his mind, "O-ho! I understand. If there is not some villainy at the bottom of this, I know nothing of villainy. The hypocrite! I'll smoke him."

Then drawing himself up with a long breath, he said aloud, "Well, colonel, I don't care if I go and see the man, if you will give me the fifty dollars."

They parted with a perfectly good understanding. M'Donner walked home. The colonel sat, with his hat over his eyes, before the fire, warming his hands and his feet, and saying to himself, "That's handsomely fixed. He may swear to every word I said, but they can't touch me. But fifty dollars is a good deal of money to trust to such a precious vagabond."

Things went on very smoothly under this system for a year or two. M'Donner received the counterfeit bills of various kinds by paying half price for them, and spent his time in rambling about on various pretexts of business, while his real object was to get off his money. He made regular payments to his principal, for he knew, unless he did so, the fountain would be cut off at once. He, however, felt galled and irritated to think how adroitly the colonel had managed to secure a share of the spoil, and yet throw all the danger on him. He longed to come to an open understanding, so that Shubael should be as much in his power as he was in Shubael's; but he could not. The wily

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The speculation.

The stage comes up to the door.

Picture.

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storekeeper refused to have any conversation on the subject, and contrived to show that he was so much in earnest about it as to convince M'Donner that if he persisted in his attempt, it would break up the whole arrangement. The colonel would pretend to be very much astonished at the nature of the business, and abandon it at once. He therefore went on, falling in with his principal's humor, but still on the watch for an opportunity to bring him so far into the business as that, if he ever got into difficulty in consequence of it, he could drag the colonel in too. Things went on in this way, without any thing being said about the nature of the business in which they were engaged, except an occasional allusion to the "speculation" when they settled their accounts.

Such was the state of affairs when the "stage" drove up to the door, and the coachman wanted change for the little girl's "five."



THE STAGE

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Change wanted for a five dollar bill.

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The driver took the five dollar note from the girl on the back seat within the stage, and brought it to the colonel. He said he was out of small bills himself, but he presumed M'Donner would change it for him. The latter looked up a moment, as if uncertain what to do; then took out an old well-worn wallet, and brought out from the different compartments several bills, some good, some bad.

"How much do you want to make?" said he.

"The fare is one dollar," said Caleb.

"There is one, then, for you," said M'Donner, "and here"—handing him two ones and a two—"are four for the girl."

"Bristol Bank—Bristol Bank," said Caleb, reading from the bills in the parcel for the girl, "are these bills good? Colonel Shubael, is the Bristol Bank good?"

"Bristol Bank? Yes, it is the best bank in the country," replied Shubael, with a very demure glance at M'Donner.

Caleb, wishing to have his own money of the best character, slipped his own good bill (for M'Donner had been shrewd enough to give him good money) with two of the others into the girl's hand, and put one of the Bristol bills in his pocket. The thin leather bag which he had thrown in at the door when he first rode up had gone through the regular ceremony of opening and locking up again behind the colonel's paling, and was now tossed up into the boot. The young man who had discussed natural theology with M'Donner got into the stage, having previously negotiated with the driver for a seat, and the vehicle drove away. Colonel Shubael opened a damp newspaper, took his seat in the doorway, and began reading a philippic upon one of the candidates for the next election to the group around the door.

One after another dropped off, and lounged along to their

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More about the axe.The handle polished by Terry's little son.

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several homes. M'Donner and two others remained, and after finishing their newspapers, they went into the store, and half leaning and half sitting upon the barrels and boxes, they began talking about Terry's axe again.

"What will you take for this axe now, colonel?" said M'Donner. "I'll give you a dollar for it, and take it as it is, and save you all the trouble of sending it back."

"Sending it back!" said he, with an expression of contempt. "It is as good an axe as ever Darlington made—*perfect* temper. Terry chose it out of my whole lot, and there is not a man at the Falls can choose an axe better than Terry, when he is sober. I would not sell it for less than two dollars to any man. See what an elegant handle he has put to it."

The handle was finished in very fine style. Terry was a skillful workman, and then he had a little bright-eyed but pale boy, whom he used to whip when he was intoxicated, as the means of inflicting the severest suffering upon his mother. This little lad, so pleased with the idea of his father's having an axe, from sympathy with his mother's joy at any indications of returning industry, had spent an hour in rubbing the handle with an old bit of sand-paper which he kept among his treasures on a beam in the barn. The handle was consequently not only admirably shaped and fitted, but it was smooth and almost soft to the touch.

M'Donner's blood boiled with that peculiar indignation which a bad man feels at the idea of being overreached by more bold and consummate villainy than his own. He, however, restrained himself. At first he thought he would accept the offer, and tender Shubael two dollars of his Bristol money, which he knew he could not refuse, having just pronounced it good in the hearing of the two men who were still standing by. But he found he could not keep cool enough to carry that through, and he accordingly threw the

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M'Donner's denunciation of Shubael's wickedness.

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reins upon the neck of his anger, and drawing himself up, and fixing his black eyes with an expression of ferocity on Shubael, as if he would look him through, he said, in a tone of great emphasis and energy,

"Well, Shubael, I'll tell you what it is. You pretend to believe there is a God—I don't. But if I did, rather than have that axe in my possession the way you've got it into yours, I'd lie down and let Terry split my head open with it as he would a log. Whether there's a God or not, I'm very sure there ought to be one, and a judgment, for such diabolical wretches as you."

So saying, he threw down the axe with violence and stalked out of the store. The by-standers looked confounded. Shubael tried to smile, but it was rather more cold and faint a smile than usual. "M'Donner feels out of humor to-day," said he, picking up the axe.

"He is a terrible fellow," said one of the men, "when his blood is up."

The store-keeper examined the axe, apparently for the purpose of seeing whether it was injured, and then set it carefully away.

In the mean time M'Donner walked away toward his home, gloomy and sullen. As he went slowly along the solitary forest road, which led down a retired glen, he could not help feeling some uneasiness about that dread futurity whose sanctions his moral sense had demanded so imperiously at the thought of the colonel's unpunished guilt. The young man's *reasoning* had not produced any impression at all; for infidelity, at least such infidelity as M'Donner's, is only one of the phases of depravity of heart, not an error of the understanding. The remedy is consequently through the conscience; there is scarcely any access to it at all through the reason. The only impression which remained upon his mind in respect to the conversation with

The master.	The little girl and the counterfeit bill.	Difficulty.
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the young man was that "the master," as he said to himself, "was a smart man, at any rate."

The young man was, in fact, the son of a substantial farmer in a neighboring town, and had been employed to teach the school at the Falls the last winter, and was universally known as "The Master" by all who sent children to the school. He had often called at M'Donner's cabin, as there was a boy there who attended his school, and his plain, frank manners, his general information, and his good sense, made, from the beginning, a favorable impression on M'Donner's mind. M'Donner was sick, too, for a week, and the master came continually to see him, and sat with him frequently when he was recovering. This was from no very particular interest in the man himself, but the result of his general feelings of kindness for the suffering; and yet there was something in the strong and well-marked character of this man, and in the energy and the decision of the movements of his mind, which attracted the master's attention, and made him strongly desirous of doing him permanent good.

The "stage" went on without any particular adventure until it reached its destination for the night, which was a small village that formed the termination of the route in that direction. The little girl tendered her Bristol bill here in payment for supper, and the tavern-keeper—a rough man, and somewhat experienced in the ways of rogues of all sorts—declared it a counterfeit.

"Seems to me you're rather young to be engaging in this business," he exclaimed to the girl, as she stood trembling before him. "How came you by this bill?"

The girl told him her story, and the tavern-keeper was just telling her that he did not believe one word of it from beginning to end, when the driver came into the bar-room where the conversation was going on, and confirmed it.

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The little girl much frightened.The master's interposition.

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Others gathered round while the driver recounted the particulars, and they were all offering their various conjectures in respect to the man, and his probable criminality or innocence, when "the master" came in, took his seat by the window, and without taking any part, or appearing to pay any attention, he listened to the conversation, and soon gathered the facts. The little girl was very much frightened, partly from the loss of her dollar, and partly from vague ideas of guilt and danger connected with the very thought of counterfeit money.

The master took an opportunity, a few minutes after, to call Caleb aside, and he introduced the subject thus :

"I understand that some of the bills you got at Shubael's to-day are counterfeit."

"Yes; do you know who that man was who changed the money?"

"I know, but I did not mention his name in the house just now, because perhaps he took them himself honestly, and he is such a sort of man as would be very much suspected if the story should get about, even if he is innocent."

"I don't think that is any reason," replied Caleb; "it ought to be known. If a man passes counterfeit money, I have no idea of hushing it up."

"No, it ought not to be hushed up. If he is guilty, he ought to be brought out and punished; but then we have no sufficient evidence that he is guilty; and by reporting this story, so as to destroy his character, we either put him more on his guard, or make him desperate, if he is guilty, and do him a great mischief if he is innocent."

"Well, what is to be done, then?"

"Let me take the bad money back to him. I will give you good bills for it. I am going back to the Falls in a few days. I know the man very well. Innocent or guilty, I know he'll take it back if I carry it to him, and I can tell



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The driver accedes to the master's proposal.

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from his looks and talk whether he got the money honestly. In the mean time, say nothing, but look out for counterfeit money, and if you meet with any, or hear of any, trace it at once as far as you can, and let me know."

The driver saw the good sense of this proposal. He went to the girl, and gave her a good bill for her bad one, telling her he was going to send it back. He then gave them both to the master, and all parties turned their thoughts into other channels.

About a week after this, the master walked one evening along the retired road which led to M'Donner's solitary dwelling. It was a mere hut of logs and slabs, in a rocky glen in the woods, with only a small patch for a few garden vegetables. There was a barn behind of good dimensions, though of very rude construction. Here M'Donner kept his horse, his traveling wagon, and a yoke of oxen, with which he used to draw his wood for fuel and his shingle bolts from the neighboring forests, without being too particular, as report said, from whose land the lumber came. In a corner of the yard, not far from the door of the house, was a rude shanty or shop, where he used to make his shingles, and do other similar work. When the master came up it was just dark, but M'Donner seemed not to have quite finished his work, for he was sharpening a stake upon a large chopping-block which stood in the yard.

"Good evening, Mr. M'Donner," said the visitor.

"Ah, master, is that you? I did not know you were any where hereabouts."

"I came down to-day, and I called to see you partly on a little business."

"Well, let's go in; I've just done. The old woman must see you. It'll set her up for four-and-twenty hours."

They walked into the cabin. An old woman, stooping with age and infirmities, was moving slowly about the room

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The master calls upon M'Donner.Interview in M'Donner's cabin.

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at her work, her motions indicating feebleness, and her countenance marked with age and imbecility. She came toward the visitor with a smile of very evident pleasure. He vociferated in her ear the usual inquiries in regard to her health and welfare, to which she replied with nods, and smiles, and half-articulated words, the former, however, doing more than two thirds toward conveying her meaning. M'Donner and his guest sat down; the former on a chest, the latter in the chair, the old woman still walking about, perpetually busy apparently—however, having very little, after all, to do. It was only the habit of industry retaining its reign; the means and objects of it were almost entirely gone.

"I called to see you, Mr. M'Donner," said his guest, as soon as they were seated, "about some bills which you gave a little girl in the stage the other day, in change for a five. The bills proved to be bad, and I want to get you to change them."

"Bills bad!" said M'Donner, gruffly; "what is the matter with them?"

"They say they are counterfeit," said the master, taking out his wallet and producing the bills.

M'Donner took the bills and pretended to examine them by the fire-light. It was, however, only a manoeuvre to gain time for considering what he should do or say.

"I told them I had no doubt you would exchange them," said the master, "and so, as I was coming back here, I brought them back with me."

"And you gave other money for it?" inquired M'Donner.

"Yes," said the master.

M'Donner found himself in the most awkward of all situations in which a guilty man can be placed—drawn into conversation about the guilty transaction, and yet not openly

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M'Donner perplexed.He finally demands an explanation.

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accused, and not even knowing whether he was suspected. Should he deny that he knew the money was counterfeit? That would be acknowledging guilt by anticipating an accusation. Should he say nothing, but simply change the money? That might be acknowledging guilt by silence, when circumstances seemed strongly to accuse. He could not see, at the instant, precisely what a really honest man would do or say in such a case. He was confused, but he concealed his confusion by pretending to be examining the bills; but the longer he sat in silence, the more he perceived he was getting entangled in the net.

M'Donner was a very shrewd man, but he had very little low cunning. If Shubael had been in his place at this juncture, he would have played his part to perfection; but M'Donner could not act the artful dissembler, and it galled and fretted him exceedingly to find himself hemmed up in a corner by a quiet manoeuvre, which he was not skillful enough to defeat by counter-manoœuvring, and which afforded him no pretext for open war.

In the mean time, the woman had taken up an old and well-worn pail, with a knotted cord for a handle, and had gone out. Her disappearance seemed to effect a change in M'Donner's mind. He turned round toward the master, looked steadily and sternly in his face, and said, in a voice very different from the mild and subdued tone in which he had been speaking,

"Master Jones, it is of no use for you and I to be playing hide-and-go-seek in this way. I want an open field and a fair view. Am I to understand that you charge me with passing counterfeit money, knowing it to be such?"

"No, Mr. M'Donner, I make no charges against you at all. I have no evidence whatever that you supposed the money to be counterfeit."

The criminal turned away, and walked back and forth

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Conversation in the cabin between M'Donner and the master.

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across the cabin. After a moment's pause the master resumed.

"But, as you say, Mr. M'Donner, we may as well be frank and open; I have not accused you, but, on the other hand, have done what I could to prevent reports getting in circulation about you; but I confess I am myself in doubt whether you knew this money to be counterfeit or not."

"And what right have you, I should like to know," angrily demanded M'Donner, "to accuse me of such a crime?"

"I do not accuse you, nor even make up my own mind that you are guilty. But, under these circumstances, you are too shrewd a man not to know that it must be a *question* in my mind how you came by these bills."

"And what concern is it of yours how I came by these or any other bills?"

"Have I asked you?" said the master, coolly. M'Donner made no reply, but strode back and forth as before. There was another pause.

"So far as I am concerned, Mr. M'Donner, it is of very little consequence whether you are in a passion or not. My nerves are not delicate, you know, and I am not easily frightened. In fact, I don't suppose you would attempt to frighten me by *acting* anger. But I wish you were a little more cool. I came only to ask you to change the bills. You can do it or not, just as you please. I make no charge against you, and I ask you no questions. But there are some circumstances which I should like to state to you, if you were only cool enough to hear me."

"I'm cool," said M'Donner, "perfectly cool. I'll listen." He sat down in his former seat on the chest, and fixed his eyes on his guest.

The master then related to him all the circumstances which took place at the stage tavern, which led him to

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M'Donner is exasperated.He threatens the master's life.

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undertake to bring back the money to him. He related the conversation which he heard in the bar-room, and also that which took place between himself and the driver. The expression of ferocity which had full possession of the criminal's features when he began, gradually relaxed. He looked perplexed, and somewhat humbled. His eye lost its fixed and fierce expression, and wandered. Presently he turned toward the fire, and when the master finished speaking, he was looking steadily into it, apparently lost in thought.

"You see, Mr. M'Donner, that had I been your paid agent, I could not have acted more for your interest. If you are innocent, I have prevented the circulation of false reports, which would have hurt your character very much. If you are guilty, it is an immense thing to you to have these bills stopped, and delivered up to you again."

One or two almost imperceptible nods, as if he were saying to himself, "True, true," was all the reply.

"And yet, Mr. M'Donner, I ought in honesty to say that I should not do any thing to screen you from justice, if there had been really evidence that you were guilty."

"You would not, hey?" said M'Donner, looking up sternly.

"No, I should not. You know I am truly your friend, but I should render all the aid in my power in convicting you, if I thought you had really been guilty of any crime."

"Intolerable!" said the criminal, once more thoroughly aroused. He seized a butcher-knife which lay upon a table near, and advanced toward his visitor. The master sat unmoved, and looked steadily into the criminal's face without a change in any muscle of his own.

"You don't know me, master, or you never would come into my cabin here and threaten me with the state's prison to my face. I would put this into you," he continued, in a

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The master reasons with him.He is not afraid of him.

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low, subdued tone, and pointing the knife toward his breast, "as readily as I would split a shingle bolt, if— You don't know me, master. You haven't seen but one side of my character yet, and I advise you not to bring out the other."

"I am in no danger," said the master, calmly.

"No danger!" said M'Donner; "yes you are, in pretty hot danger. You have threatened to have me sent to the state's prison."

"No," said the master, "not exactly."

"You have threatened to do all you could toward it."

"No, not exactly that."

"Well, at any rate, if I get into any difficulty about this business, I tell you now that I shall know who to lay it to, and you may depend on it you'll rue the day you ever moved a finger against me. So take warning."

"Mr. M'Donner," said the master, calmly, but seriously, "why will you give way to such passions? You know perfectly well that I am really your friend; that I wish you well, and would do any thing in my power to help you. You know too, very well, that I should do all in my power, under any circumstances, to bring a criminal to justice. Your threats have no effect—yes, they have one effect; they make me feel mortified to find that you don't know me any better than to suppose you can frighten me with that butcher-knife. I've been in far greater danger from you than your threats put me in now."

"When?" said M'Donner.

"When you lay there," said the master, pointing to a corner of the room where M'Donner lay sick with small-pox at the time to which we have already alluded.

The mind of the criminal reverted to the scenes which had passed a year or two before, when he had been abandoned by almost every body else, but yet faithfully visited and watched over by the Christian philanthropist whose

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M'Donner makes a confession.The master himself is now perplexed.

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life he was now threatening with his butcher-knife. He walked away, laid down his knife, and took his seat again.

"Well, Master Jones," said he, "there is one way I can secure you, at any rate. You never would betray confidence, I know, and so I tell you now in confidence that your suspicions are true. I *did* know the bills were counterfeit."

The visitor sat silent and perplexed at this unexpected issue of the conversation. There was a long pause. The master was lost in thought, considering what course it would be best for him to pursue. The criminal was half in doubt whether he had not made a misstep. His confession was, in fact, the result of impulse, of momentary feeling, not of calculation, but as soon as it was made, calculation came in to examine the probable consequences of it.

"Mr. M'Donner," at length said the master, "you place me in a very unpleasant position. I ought not to consider such a confession, so entirely voluntary, as restraining me from doing my duty in respect to the laws of the land."

There was another pause. M'Donner had nothing to reply.

"Mr. M'Donner," said his visitor again, "do you justify yourself in what you have done, or do you consider it wrong?"

"What difference does it make to *me*," said M'Donner, "whether any thing is right or wrong?"

"That is the difficulty, true enough," said the master. "You shut out God, and so undermine and destroy every foundation of right and wrong, and now your character, your peace of mind, and your soul have fallen into the ruin you have made. Mr. M'Donner, I would do any thing in my power to help you, but I am sure I do not know what to do." The master rose as he said this, and took his turn in walking back and forth across the room. M'Donner sat

Picture of the cabin.

Deaf as a ferry-boat.

M'Donner's mother.

on the end of the chest, leaning forward with his folded arms resting upon his knees, and his eyes fixed on the fire.

While things were in this position, the old woman came tottering in, with her pail partly filled with milk, which she had obtained, by slow and feeble efforts, from a cow which stood in a corner of the yard. M'Donner took no notice of her return, but



M'DONNER AND MASTER JONES.

the master seemed a little uneasy, and looked inquiringly toward her when M'Donner asked some question which alluded to the subject on which they had been talking; but he told him not to mind her, as she was as deaf as a ferry-boat. Notwithstanding his perplexed and melancholy state of mind, the master's thoughts were diverted a moment by the quaintness of the comparison, for he recollected how often he had stood on the shore of the river at the Ferryways, shouting FERRY till he was hoarse, in a vain attempt to make the boatman hear, while the boat itself was lying in full view, sleeping calmly upon the glassy water, and with an expression of utter indifference and unconcern.

This little reverie was not fairly concluded before the good old lady approached him with a little tin dipper of her warm milk, which she offered him with a childish smile. The master had often gratified her, in days gone by, by taking a drink of her milk and praising its richness. He



Contrasts of Character.	M'Donner resolves to act.	His preparations.
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received the dipper with nods and forced smiles, which were strangely contrasted with the gloomy thoughts that had possession within. In fact, he was, as it were, the point of junction between two extremes most completely contrasted. There was the quiet, contented, innocent imbecility of the woman, and the stern, gloomy, and agitated passion of the man. The master stood between them, his countenance reflecting the smiles and the satisfaction of the one, while his heart was tumultuously agitated in sympathy with the other.

It was not long before he concluded to take his leave. He wished for time and solitude, that he might determine what to do. He accordingly promised M'Donner that he would come and see him the next day, and offered him his hand to bid him good-night. M'Donner extended his hand in silence, without changing his attitude or taking his eyes from the fire. The master then nodded to the old lady with another forced smile, and went out into the open air. The evening was calm and pleasant. The sky was clear, and the air was filled with the hum of insects wheeling in every direction among the trees of the forest. The master walked slowly down the valley.

M'Donner sat several minutes in the position in which his visitor had left him, and then rose, saying to himself, "Well, I must not sit here, at any rate." He followed the feeble old woman a minute or two with his eye, and then said aloud, "Poor creature! If it was not for you, I should know what to do."

After a time he went out into his shop, and brought a coarse bag, and laid it down at the door of the house. He then went in, and watching opportunities when he was not observed by the old woman, he took out various articles of food, a loaf of coarse bread, a piece of meat, a dipper, an old hatchet, and a tinder-box. These he put in the bag,

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He goes down into the ravine.The master's walk home.

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and tied the mouth up with a string. He carried this bag out to his rude barn, and, lifting the wooden latch, went in. Here, suspended from a huge peg, hung an old, well-worn saddle and bridle, which M'Donner took down and threw over his shoulder; and steadying it with one hand, and taking up his bag with the other, he sallied forth, turned round behind the barn, and went down by a narrow path into a darkly-wooded ravine.

At the bottom of the ravine he crossed a brook by stepping-stones, but instead of following the path beyond, he turned to the left up the stream. The way was rough, being covered with stones and underbrush, all, however, covered with a profusion of the richest and softest moss. It was quite dark, too; for, though it was a bright starlight night, yet the tall trees which filled and entirely overshadowed the glen excluded the light, and made it somewhat difficult for our adventurer to make his way. He went on thus for a considerable distance, and then turning aside from the brook, pushed his way into a little thicket, and there laid down his load.

This being done, he clambered up a steep and well-wooded bank, and upon its summit came out upon an opening, across which he could see that his cabin, though it was at some distance, was brought plainly into view. Along the edge of this opening, he made his way through bushes and brakes back toward his solitary dwelling.

In the mean time the master walked along the lonely road toward the Falls, sadly perplexed in his attempts to decide what he ought to do. Should he take measures for bringing the criminal to justice? It was very hard, when the man had cast himself, as it were, upon his generosity and mercy, by so voluntary a confession, to be the means of his ruin. The feelings of the master strongly inclined him to be silent; but then, was it right for him to allow such a

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The master meets a party coming.

He conceals himself.

His hiding-place.

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criminal to continue the commission of his crimes, when it was so perfectly in his power to prevent it? He tried in vain to frame some reason why he should consider the confession as sacred, so as to justify him in withholding the knowledge he had obtained by it, but he could not; and he was just wishing that the stage-driver or some others might have obtained some other clew to the discovery of the guilt, when he heard footsteps and voices before him.

The road was winding, and he could not see far before him, but he thought at once that it might very probably be a party coming to arrest the criminal.

He instinctively stepped out of the road, and stood behind the root of a large tree which had been overturned by the wind. He had barely done this before the party came up.

"What o'clock is it now?" said one, in a suppressed voice.

"About half past eight," said another, taking out his watch, and stopping a moment, and endeavoring to make out the position of the hands by starlight. "I can't see, but it is not far from that."

"We had better wait, then, somewhere here an hour or more. We had better find him asleep than awake, major. Let's see exactly what time it is; haul out your lantern."

They had got, by this time, several steps beyond the tree where the master was concealed. The roots of a forest tree spread round in a circle very near the surface of the ground, and when the tree is blown down, this flat circle of roots, with the earth attached to it, is raised up on its edge, the stem of the tree proceeding from the centre. In this case the stem and top of the tree were turned away from the road, so that the under surface of the roots was toward it; and when the party had passed by and then stopped a little beyond him, Mr. Jones cautiously climbed

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The master in an awkward situation.His danger.

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over the tree, in order to get a better view of the road, by looking around the edge of his screen.

It was a strange thing for the master to get into any situation of concealment or dissimulation. It was contrary to his principles. He would not have taken this course if he had had a moment's reflection; and just as he was getting down gently from the stem of the tree, he began to think that he had done wrong; that he ought to have gone forward and met the party, and thus, at least, have been open and honest in his policy. But it happened that under the smooth surface of the leaves, where he planted his foot, there was a small piece of a half-decayed branch, which cracked under his weight just as the party in the road had got out the dark lantern.

"What's that?" said one of the voices.

"Hark!" said another.

The master shrunk into as small a compass as possible, and held his breath.

"Fire your pistol in there, major," said one.

"That would be a pretty thing," said another voice in reply. "Give M'Donner the alarm for the sake of scaring a woodchuck."

"Give me the lantern," said another; "I'll go and see what it is. Perhaps it is a rabbit. I'll grab him."

"Yes, and perhaps it is a rattlesnake, and then the grabbing will be the other way."

"Well," said the master to himself, while this dialogue was going on, "I thought I knew before that plain and open dealing was always the best policy. I think I shall remember it after this. However, I must get away now as well as I can." So saying, he clambered gently over the fallen trunk again, and crept softly along under the trees and bushes into the wood, the men in the road listening to his footsteps, and wondering what animal it could be.

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M'Donner watches the house.      He comes home.      Instructions to his mother.

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In the mean time, M'Donner, on his way back to his house along the edge of the opening, had got to a certain place where he could see through a thin part of the forest down to the road. His attention was arrested by the glancing of the light from the lantern upon the masses of foliage across the road, as the persons there were vainly endeavoring to bring it to bear on the object that excited their attention. He at once concluded that it was a party coming to arrest him.

"Yes," said he, "I understand it now. That was the master's plan. They staid by, while he came in to reconnoitre—the traitor! But all right—all right; it is a good trap, but it won't catch the weasel this time."

The excitement of the game which was about to be played between him and his pursuers aroused the criminal from his despondency, and banished all his feelings of remorse. He hastened home. As soon as he reached the door he assumed a careless and leisurely air, walked slowly in, threw down his cap, and sat down upon his chest.

In a minute he arose and went up to his aged housekeeper, and putting his mouth close to her ear, he said aloud,

"Mother, perhaps I shall go away to-morrow. When you are alone, hang a cloth out of the back window, and when any body is here, take it in."

"Yes, yes," said the old woman, nodding, "I will."

"So," said he, taking up a checked apron which was hanging over the back of the chair, and carrying it to the window to explain precisely how he meant. He went through the operation himself, and told her to be sure to put it out whenever she was alone, but whenever she had company to take it in.

"Yes, yes, I will."

She was accustomed to his long absences, and to the strange, arbitrary directions he usually left behind him on

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Hiding-place for the counterfeit money.The evening star.

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such occasions. By long-continued efforts he had trained his decrepit parent to follow his orders precisely, and without indulging in any curiosity respecting the object of them. In fact, there was scarcely mind enough left to feel much curiosity. The old woman received the directions, and then relapsed into the vacancy of thought and feeling which she had been lost in before.

Her hopeful son then carelessly walked out, cap in hand. He stopped and listened at the door. All was still. He then went into a corner of the yard, and began to scrape away some chips and straw. He brought to view a small flat stone on the surface of the ground, which he raised. Under it was a cavity containing a small bundle of bank bills. He then went into the barn, and took an old and tattered horse-blanket from a corner, and went down into the glen, and up the brook to his place of concealment. After depositing his bundle of bills in a hollow log, he clambered up the bank to the place where he could see his cabin. He placed a large tuft of moss for a pillow in a little thicket, rolled himself up in his blanket, and then lay down with his face turned toward his house, which he could see between the stems of the bushes. Their foliage formed a thick canopy over his head, which the light of a few stars contrived to twinkle through, and Venus, just going down in the west in unusual brilliancy, cast a few faint shadows upon his features.

The retiring planet not only thus peeped in upon the criminal's retreat, but she watched, at the same time, the motions of the group of his pursuers, who were quietly seated on tufts of moss and on logs at a short distance from the road, waiting the slow lapse of time; she also caught an occasional glimpse of the master, as he made a circuit in the forest, which brought him out into the road again, and then rapidly pursued his way. But, notwithstanding the

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M'Donner's mother.

The officers come to the house.

Search.

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advantage of her position, the beautiful goddess seemed to feel no interest in the development of the plot whose crisis was so fast approaching, for her beaming countenance soon faded away in the hazes of the horizon, and she sank to repose precisely at her wonted time.

Not so, however, with the less ethereal personage in the cabin. She was usually very little disturbed at her son's absence, for he was coming and going at all times. She delayed going to bed from a vague feeling that something was wanting, though she had no clear idea what. She was busy here and there, with her mind in very nearly that state which we of brighter intellects experience when we are leaving a place with a vague idea that we have left or forgotten something, but do not know what it is. This continued till about ten o'clock, and then, as she was just arranging the fire for the night by means of a wooden poker made of a long pole of green wood, she thought she heard a knock at the door.

The officer and his party had come cautiously up to the house, and after having stationed one or two individuals on the several sides, he himself, with one other, approached the door. They had knocked several times without obtaining any answer; but at last, by very violent blows, they succeeded in making a slight impression on the old lady's dull sense. She came to the door, poker in hand, the blackened end resting upon the ground near her feet. The visitors were not ceremonious. They pressed at once into the room, and looked eagerly all around it.

Seeing no one else there, the officer turned round and said loudly, "Where's Mr. M'Donner?"

"Oh! she's deaf," said the other; "she can't hear that. I'll ask her."

So saying, he put his mouth close to her ear, and called out,

Fruitless interrogatories.

A fruitless search.

Mr. Jones.

"Where's your son? Isn't he at home?"

"Yes," said the old lady, leaning forward on her poker, and nodding, as if to help convey her idea. "Yes, yes, he's at home."

"Where is he?" said the officer.

She saw his lips move, and repeated her answer,

"Yes, yes, he's at home."

"Where is he?" vociferated the officer's companion, with his mouth at his hearer's ear as before.

"I don't know," said she, shaking her head continually, "I don't know where he is."

"I thought you told us he was at home," said the man, with a loud voice.

The good woman looked somewhat bewildered at such a multitude of interrogatories, but immediately answered as before, "Yes, he is at home. My son is at home."

"The old fool!" said the officer, dropping his voice. "Let us look for ourselves."

They made a most thorough search in and around the cabin, but the accused was, of course, nowhere to be found. They tried once more to question the old woman, but could get nothing but the same replies. She went on quietly with her work, as busy as ever, while the search was going on, the operations of her visitors attracting her attention in about the same degree as the movements of thieves in a stable at midnight would arouse that of an intelligent horse feeding in his stall. She was, however, glad when they went away. She latched the door after them, and mechanically went to rest.

Three days after this, as Mr. Jones was walking along the road at a place where it skirted the pond—a pleasant farm, with mowing fields and orchards on one side, and the pebbly beach on the other—he saw a small boy coming along



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The master receives a letter from M'Donner.

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the road toward him. The boy walked very slowly when he saw the master, and regarded him with a smile of recognition.

"Why, John," said the master, "is this you? How you have grown!"

"Yes, sir," said John. "I've got a letter for you."

So saying, he put up both hands to his cap, one upon each side, and pitched his head forward so as to make a low bow, taking off his cap at the moment when the declination of his head was a maximum. This manœuvre was successfully executed, for he had practiced it often in drawing nuts from the same depository, and the boy then held out the cap toward the master with both hands, the letter lying safely in the crown.

"Where did you get this?"

"A man gave it to me."

"Who was it?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Where did you see him?"

"In the road, sir."

By this time the master had opened the letter, and conjectured who his correspondent was. So he thanked the boy for bringing it, and walked along.

The letter was a miserable scrawl, and folded in so clumsy a manner as to give the exterior an aspect which was entirely in keeping with the appearance within. Disregarding the misspelling, the erasures, and the blots, it read as follows:

*"Master Jones,—I wish to see you, if I can. If you will follow up Beaver brook from the North bridge a quarter of a mile, Wednesday morning after breakfast, you will find me there. But don't bring another gang of men with you to take me to jail. I want to see you as a friend."*

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The master goes to meet the appointment.

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Though the letter was without name or date, the reader of it had little difficulty in determining the writer. He hesitated a long time as to the course he ought to pursue, but he finally concluded to go.

On Wednesday morning the sun was bright and beautiful, and the air calm and serene. Beaver brook flowed across the road in a solitary ravine, into which the road descended on one side and ascended on the other by a sharp inclination. The bridge was of logs, and the bed of the stream rocky and wild.

Arrived at the spot, the master clambered over the side of the bridge, and began to ascend the stream. The ravine grew more narrow, precipitous, and wild the further he proceeded. The brook tumbled over rocks, and ragged precipices, covered with moss, overhung the bed of it, wild flowers and evergreens clinging to their sides. Towering trees were scattered here and there in hollows and dells, overshadowing the whole scene, and shutting out the light and heat which the sun was pouring down upon all the country around.

The master made his way slowly, in part because he paused continually to look around upon the romantic features of the place, and partly because the way was rough and obstructed. Sometimes he had to climb up a steep rock, then again to descend among massive fragments into a chasm ; and in many places great trees had fallen in, and lay, half decayed, directly across his path.

He arrived at length at a point where an enormous elm, which had grown to a vast height from the high bank upon one side, had been blown over some ten years before, and had pitched its head directly into the ravine, so as almost entirely to choke up the passage by its broken and entangled branches. While he was hesitating and looking for a passage through, he heard a voice calling to him, "To

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The wild ravine.

M'Donner.

The interview.

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the right, master—to the right.” Looking forward in the direction of the sound, just under the great stem of the elm, which stretched across through the air a little higher than his head, he saw the well-known figure of M'Donner seated composedly under the trees, upon an elevated rocky shelf which projected from the higher crags behind it. From the tops of these crags green slopes extended gradually into the woods on the bank, but they seemed inaccessible from below. The master turned to the right, passed under the elm, and into an opening which led through the thicket. He then soon reached the foot of the rock.

“Good-morning, Mr. M'Donner,” said he; “but how am I to get up there?”

“First, I want to know whether you come as a friend; or have you got another gang of officers hid somewhere down in the valley?”

“I come as a friend,” was the reply.

M'Donner looked a moment incredulously. Then he said, “It makes no difference; I can take care of myself, at any rate. Pass round the point of the rock there, and I will help you up.”

Turning round the point as directed, he saw a wide chasm, with ragged and broken sides, by means of which he clambered up to the position which M'Donner had taken. A small tree lay upon the level area, with what remained of its top hanging over the edge. The bark had long since disappeared from the stem, and the smooth surface of the wood had been bleached by many a summer's sun. Here M'Donner took his seat, turning his eye from time to time down the valley.

“I see you have not much confidence in me, Mr. M'Donner. Did I ever attempt to practice any deception upon you?”

“Not till the other night.”

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Conversation between the master and M'Donner in the ravine.

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"I had nothing to do with that party."

M'Donner seemed surprised at this, and questioned his visitor somewhat closely in respect to the circumstances. He seemed at length satisfied, and was evidently much pleased to find that the master really knew nothing of the plans of his enemies.

"What I have sent to you for," resumed he, "is this: I am going away, and shall not return, and I wanted to ask you to see to my poor old mother a little."

There was the slightest possible faltering in his voice as he spoke these words.

"She has got to be old, and she don't know much, and needs a little looking after. I want you to take this money, and just contrive to send her some little comforts now and then, as long as it lasts. It is all I have."

While saying this, he took out from a capacious pocket a little roll of bank bills, enveloped in a small piece of newspaper, and held it out. The master did not receive it.

"I must think a minute, Mr. M'Donner," said he, "before I receive this money. It may not be very safe for one to have money dealings with you, situated as you are."

"The money is good," said M'Donner, emphatically, "every dollar of it."

"I have no doubt of that; but how can I account for my being supplied with money from you, after what has happened, without being suspected myself? But I do pity your poor mother," he added, after a pause, "from the bottom of my heart."

M'Donner said nothing, but employed his fingers busily in twisting up the ends of the roll as tightly as possible.

"Where are you going to?" said the master, after a pause.

"I don't know," said he, shaking his head, but without raising his eyes from the ground.

"What are your plans for the future?"

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M'Donner's plan for making his escape.Evidence of the being of a God.

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"Have none at all."

"They're watching for you all about the country here. How do you expect to escape?"

M'Donner pointed to a little glade at a short distance, where the master, on turning his eyes, saw a horse, saddled and bridled, and fastened to a small tree. He was reaching up his head to browse upon the leaves and branches above him.

"Chestnut, there, will take me away fast enough."

A considerable pause followed this conversation. Both parties seemed perplexed. M'Donner played with his roll of bills, and the master pulled up little sprigs of moss from the rocks around, and arranged them on his hand. At last he brushed them all off, and looked up as if he had come to a decision.

"Mr. M'Donner," said he, "you have not asked my advice, it is true, but I advise you to do no such thing."

"Not to go away?" said M'Donner, surprised.

"No," said the master. "You are engaged in two terrible contests—with God and with man; and I advise you not to carry either of them any farther."

"I have no contest with *God*. There is no God. I can't believe contrary to evidence."

"No, no, Mr. M'Donner," replied the master, "that is not the difficulty. If you would look into your own motives and character as closely as you sometimes do into those of other people, you would see that the difficulty is that you *won't* believe *according* to evidence;" then taking up a slender but beautifully finished sprig of moss from the tuft near him, which presented to view, on a close inspection, green branching leaflets from its stems, and a most brilliant, though minute fructification, "there," said he "there is *evidence* enough, in that single sprig, if evidence was all that was wanting."

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Reason for M'Donner's unbelief.The master's earnest expostulations.

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M'Donner took the sprig between his coarse and callous fingers, and eyed it with attention, but he made no reply.

"No, Mr. M'Donner," continued the master, "your unbelief is only the vain struggle of your depraved heart against the *authority* of God. You do not mean to obey his commands, and in so doing you feel a little easier if you deny his existence. Now honestly, is not that the real state of the case?"

The unbeliever shook his head slowly and thoughtfully, but made no reply.

"That is the true state of the case, I have no doubt; and I ask you, Mr. M'Donner, whether you did not feel uneasy and anxious about the future, and about your own sins, long before you took it into your head to be an infidel?"

"Well, suppose I did? Go on."

"And when you first heard the existence of God denied, did you not welcome it as good news, and use it to quiet your conscience, and make you easy in your sins?"

M'Donner was leaning forward, with his arms folded upon his knees, and his eyes fixed upon the ground, and the master thought he perceived a very slight nod, as if the spirit within gave so full an affirmative to his question that pride could not entirely suppress the outward indication of assent.

"And was it not the immediate effect," continued the master, "to make you more hard-hearted and reckless, more selfish, and more ripe for wickedness?"

There was again no reply except the almost imperceptible movement of the head, which might have been accidental, but the master could not help considering it as a signal of encouragement from an ally within.

"I am a much younger man than you, Mr. M'Donner," he continued, "and it seems scarcely proper for me to speak so plainly. But you know it does not proceed from any ill

M'Donner's reflections.

His gloomy forebodings.

A contest.

will. I only wish to have you see the truth—that you have been for many years, instead of loving and obeying God, bidding him open defiance; instead of trying to do good to men, you have been trampling upon their rights, and breaking the most just and necessary laws; and now your peace of mind, and all hopes of happiness, are gone, and you must go away a fugitive and a vagabond, and leave your aged mother to die in destitution and solitude.”

The conversation which the master had held with this stern criminal at his house on the evening of the attempted arrest had sensibly affected him. It had brought vividly before his mind the possibility, at least, that his infidel opinions had been only assumed, through the influence of a depraved and corrupt heart. He had been, since that time, a good deal occupied in the plans and arrangements for his escape, but his mind was ill at ease. Conscience was gradually reviving, and at every interval of leisure his thoughts were busy with his past sins, and with the gloomy prospects for the future which he saw must be before him if the master's view of the subject should prove true. Then, being in this state of mind, he could not help feeling a great deal of regret at the necessity of leaving his lonely mother, probably never to see her again. The thought, too, that he must bid farewell to his snug little home, perhaps never to return to it, filled his mind with melancholy. These feelings *would have* taken the type of gloomy and sullen despair, but the kind and sympathizing conversation of the master had brought out a new element of emotion, which gave to the result a tinge of sadness and sorrow. A feeling of tender regard for his aged parent, which one would hardly have thought so stern a nature was capable of, rose to his mind, and made him strongly desirous to do something for her comfort, and this led him to seek the interview we are describing.

Thus, when the master commenced his conversation, con-

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What the master advised M'Donner to do.

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science, and the reviving feelings of natural affection, were maintaining in his mind a heavy warfare with pride and impenitence, the former steadily gaining ground. He succeeded in repressing all external indications of the conflict, though with greater and greater difficulty, until, at length, the winding up of the terrible summary of his sins with the allusion to the destitution and want of his deserted mother completely overwhelmed him. He bowed his head upon his arms, still folded across his knees, and sobbed aloud.

The master waited some minutes in silence. The criminal gradually recovered his composure, and raised his head, still keeping his eyes fixed upon the ground, and in a desponding voice asked his friend what he *could* do.

"The first thing is to give up your mad contest with God, and become reconciled to him."

M'Donner was silent.

"And the next is," continued the master, "to give up your contest with your fellow-men."

"I never mean to pass any more bad money," said he, shaking his head and looking up.

"I am glad to hear you say that; and then, besides, I would not attempt to escape now."

"What! give myself up?" asked he, with apparent surprise.

"I do not know that you ought to take any measures to give yourself up, but I would not resist justice or fly from it. It is only prolonging the controversy."

"And so you would go to prison when you could just as well get away?"

"It makes very little difference to you, Mr. M'Donner, whether you go to prison or not. The suffering you have to fear is remorse and mental misery here, and God's judgments hereafter. I would give up the whole contest together, be reconciled to God, and yield submissively to the laws of the land. Then you can enjoy peace of mind, and



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M'Donner finally resolves not to follow the advice.

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begin to enjoy it immediately. After what has passed, you can not expect to be in a prosperous and happy worldly condition for some time to come ; but you can have peace of mind, and I should rather have it in prison than be a wretched fugitive and wanderer, with the displeasure of both God and man pursuing me wherever I should go."

We are sorry to say that while the master was saying these words, pride and ungodliness were slowly recovering from their temporary defeat, and at the conclusion of them M'Donner arose, with an expression of composure and firmness in his eye.

"Master Jones," said he, "I believe you are really my friend, and I do not know but that your advice is good ; but I can not follow it. I don't suppose that you and I will ever think alike on these subjects, and it's no use wasting time talking here. Here is this money, though, for my mother. Will you take charge of it for her or not?"

"I am afraid, Mr. M'Donner, that that money does not rightly belong to you. If you will give me the names of all the persons about here to whom you have paid bad money, I will see them, as I may have occasion, and repay as many of the losers as I can."

To this proposition the criminal made no reply. He slowly put the roll of money back into his pocket, saying, after a short pause,

"Well, God help my poor mother, then—if there is any God."

He walked slowly away toward his horse. The master followed him with his eye, expecting every moment to see him turn round and renew the conversation. But he moved on with a slow and melancholy step to the spot where his horse was tied. He tightened the girths, unfastened the bridle from the tree, and took it on his arm, and then, ascending among the trees and rocks, he soon disappeared, and the master saw him no more.

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Fergus again.

Going down to the water.

The boat.

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## CHAPTER V.

## THE CLIFFS OF HOARYHEAD.

It was about a week after the counterfeiter had made his escape from justice that Fergus might have been seen, one lovely morning, coming out of the back door of his father's house with a skip and a jump, indicative of special delight from present or anticipated pleasure. A moment after, his father followed, walking slowly along upon his knees, with his countenance indicative of more *quiet* satisfaction. Presently Mary appeared at the door with her bonnet on, and then disappeared again, as she went back to shut a window. She soon came once more, walking backward, as if taking a survey of the great kitchen in all its arrangements, to see if every thing was left in proper condition. Finally, she shut the door carefully, and hurried on after her companions.

They crossed a small garden, and then entered a wood, descending rapidly by a winding road until, at a short distance before them, the eye caught a glimpse of water, lying dark, deep, and still in the woods.

Fergus had been walking by the side of his father, but the moment he saw the water he darted off and ran down to the edge of it. A small flat-bottomed boat lay with its bows upon the shore, and half its length concealed by overhanging bushes. In fact, the whole sheet of water, as at first visible, seemed scarcely big enough for such a boat to turn round in. But Fergus climbed carefully into the boat

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The whole party get into the boat.

Beauty of the stream.

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and walked along to the stern, and there he could see, as he had often done before, that there was a long, deep channel, winding around between high mossy banks, overhung with dense forest vegetation. In fact, this water was the outlet of a brook, which had tumbled over rocks and declivities from the mountains, but having now reached the bed of the pond, meandered slowly along in a deep channel to its mouth.

George threw his crutches into the boat, and then clambered over the bows cautiously himself, Fergus sitting at the helm, and calling out, "Steady, father, steady. Trim boat." With many anxious looks and smiles of satisfaction alternating on her countenance, Mary followed. In fact, for several minutes the expressions of fear and pleasure in her face were ludicrously blended. However, she began to feel entirely at her ease as soon as George fairly had his oars rigged and began pulling down the stream.

Fergus watched the objects which they passed as they glided along. At one time he leaned over the stern and looked down into the water upon the bottom, varied as it was with shoals, and rocks, and sunken logs, and now and then dark depths through which the trout darted. Then he would watch the shores. Here a heavy growth of alders fringed the low margin of the stream; then a firmer, higher bank, carpeted with moss, or covered with luxuriant ferns, and overshadowed with lofty oaks and maples; next, the boat swept round a long sedgy point, whose form was marked by its growth of flags and bulrushes. He had a little paddle in his hand, with which he attempted to steer as he sat in the stern; but it was a crooked navigation, and more than once he ran the bows of the craft into the bushes or upon the sand.

At length the brook widened; the waters appeared more deep, and dark, and still, and the broad leaves of the pond

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Sailing down the stream.They come out upon the pond.

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THE BOAT-PARTY.

lilies floated in the eddies. They soon came to a reach in the stream which was terminated by the open pond. The boat pressed rapidly forward ; on one side was firm ground and a forest of lofty trees ; on the other, a low sandy point, with a shoal covered with rushes and lily-pads extending out from it into the pond beyond. The boat swept round this point, grazed through the bulrushes, and stood out to sea.

The surface of the water was smooth, and the air calm. On their right was a long sandy beach, with fields and scattered trees beyond ; and on the left, across the pond, was an extended landscape of wooded shores and scattered openings, with distant hills and mountains in the horizon. Their course was diagonally across, and Hoaryhead reared his gray summit directly before them.

"How shall I steer now?" said Fergus, when he found he was fairly out upon the water.

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Fergus is reminded of his walk across the pond in the winter.

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"As you are," said his father, resting on the oars and looking round; "right for old Hoaryhead, for the present, till we see the landing."

"Father," said Fergus, again, in a short time, as they were gliding along at some distance from the shore, "I believe that breathing-hole was somewhere along here."

"What breathing-hole?" said his father.

"That one I came so near getting into last winter."

"Oh, that dreadful night!" said Mary.

"You must have got a good deal out of your way, Fergus."

"Yes, father; but it is not so easy keeping a straight track on the pond in such a snow-storm. How different it is to-day!" he continued, as he felt the bland breath of the morning fanning his cheek and playing in his bosom. "I could not see much more than the length of this boat before me then, and now I could make out a robin on the top of old Hoaryhead."

"I don't know. It is farther to the top of old Hoaryhead than you think."

"I believe I can see a smoke there," said he, fixing his eye steadily upon the mountain.

"Where?" said his mother; for she was sitting in the stern of the boat, and her face also was turned toward the mountain.

"Just above the pines—near the lower cliffs. Don't you see, mother?"

"No; what can it be?" said she.

"An eruption, I rather think," said George, smiling incredulously, and still pulling his oars without turning his head, for of course, as oarsman, his back was toward the mountain, and his face toward his son at the helm. "Old Hoaryhead must be turning volcano."

Fergus dropped his eyes from the vast pile before him to

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Smoke on the side of old Hoaryhead.

Gilbert and his mother.

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his father's face, joined in the smile, and raised them again. "It is a smoke, or else a little mist," said he.

"It is possible that it is smoke," said his father. "Some boys up there a blueberrying may have made a fire."

"Oh, I see Gilbert's house now," said Fergus, turning his eyes off to the right, for by this time the boat was approaching the opposite shore, and the fields and trees opened and glided by with increasing velocity. A little landing was visible a quarter of a mile before them to the right, and beyond, slowly moving through the trees, the single chimney, and now and then the corner of a roof appeared.

"Turn in, then, toward the landing," said George, resting for a moment on his oars, and looking over his left shoulder.

Fergus turned his paddle, the water rippled against its sides, the boat swept round, and stood in for the shore.

Gilbert was sitting on the bank under the bushes, concealed from view, waiting for the party in the boat. His mother and Mary were cousins, and had been intimate friends in early life, but their intimacy had been somewhat interrupted for ten years past by the distance between their dwellings, and by the peculiar circumstances which confined each so much to her own home. The want of religious sympathy, also, had given rise to a slight alienation; but during this summer, while Gilbert and his mother had been in their new home, the old friendship had been renewed and cemented by the strong bond of union to a common Savior. The boat which Fergus, in the winter, had found frozen up upon the shore, had been cut out as early as possible in the spring, and had since, every week or two, felt the impulse of George's oars on the track between the dwellings.

They landed. Fergus and Gilbert prepared their baskets for an excursion up the mountain after blueberries; George

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The boys set out to go a blueberrying.Walk up the mountain.

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took his seat on the broad stone step of the end door, which looked out upon the orchard; while Gilbert's mother busied herself in preparing dinner, talking all the time with Mary, who sat knitting at the window. The boys bade them good-by, and receiving an injunction to return by the middle of the afternoon, they sallied forth with their baskets on their arms.

They walked along for a quarter of a mile by the shore of the pond, and then came out into the main road by the side of a brook. They crossed the brook upon a bridge, and then turned off into the woods by a cart-path which led along the shores of the brook up the valley. It was a wild place; rocks, thickets, and fallen trees on one side, and the tumbling waters of the rivulet upon the other. The nearer they approached the mountain the more entirely it disappeared from view, and the only indications of its presence were the increasing steepness of the ascent, the depth of the ravines, the wildness of the rocks, and the luxuriance of the mosses which curtained the crags or hung in festoons upon the trees.

The cart-path grew smaller and less trodden, until at length it became a mere foot-track worn by berrying parties; its ascent was more and more steep, but the dense forest shut out the view on every side. The moss, too, increased as they ascended, until at length every thing, ground, rocks, logs, trees, branches, were all completely covered with a rich green mantle. The whole forest was wrapped in it, as if it had fallen from the clouds instead of snow. At length the land became more broken and rocky; there were rugged chasms, and bare ravines, and gray ledges of rock; and at last they emerged from the wood, and came out upon a broad surface, comparatively level and smooth, composed of vast alternate patches of rock and blueberry bushes.

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They come to the cliffs of Hoaryhead.The cave.

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The reader must not, however, suppose that this was the summit of the mountain. It was more properly the base; for this brow or shelf was terminated beyond by a long range of perpendicular precipices which seemed effectually to forbid all farther progress. These precipices were not more than fifty feet high, but they concealed from view the summit of the mountain, which towered to a vast height immediately behind them. By coasting along under this wall for half a mile, an adventurer, bent on reaching the top of Hoaryhead, would find them running into ragged declivities which might be scaled. But Fergus and Gilbert had no such design. They were at the end of their expedition, and began to gather their berries. Before them was spread out the beautiful valley of the Winding Pond, and behind them was this majestic wall, marked with fissures and frightful chasms, and crowned by a fringe of studded firs and pines, which peeped over from the edge above.

These rocks were called the Cliffs of Hoaryhead, and there were here and there deep fissures and chasms, which might have furnished an Arab with a very respectable dwelling. The boys crept into one of these and ate their dinner, and then came out again into the open area and went on with their work of gathering their berries. In the course of an hour they had moved along for some distance, and at length, as Gilbert rose from among the bushes, his eye fell upon a light smoke rising slowly from among the rocks and trees in a very retired ravine. The boys went in the direction indicated. They passed round a projecting point of rock, and through a little copse of wood, and a moment afterward they came in sight of the remains of what appeared to have been a considerable fire; the brands were still smoking. It was built in front of a chasm, formed by two great masses of rock, which seemed to have been



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They find M'Donner in a cave.Going back in the story.

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tumbled into the ravine, and leaned in such a manner upon one another as to make quite a little shelter.

Almost at the same instant that they saw the fire, the eyes of the boys rested upon the figure of a man sitting in a mournful and dejected posture upon a stone in the little



THE DISCOVERY OF M'DONNER.

cave. He was reclining his head upon his hand, his elbow resting upon a projecting fragment of the rock by his side.

"What's that?" said Gilbert, much frightened, the figure raising his head slowly at the same instant. Gilbert turned and ran, calling to Fergus, in a suppressed tone, to come too. Fergus retreated slowly backward a step or two,

still keeping his eye fixed upon the stranger. He wore a red handkerchief about his neck, and a rough, shaggy frock-coat. His hair, eyebrows, and whiskers were long, black, and bushy. In a word, it was M'Donner, and we must go back in our story to explain how he came here.

When we left him, or, rather, when he left us, he was going slowly away through the woods after his interview with the master, up the Beaver brook. He guided the horse among the bushes for a few rods until he came to a path, and then went slowly along, the reins upon the horse's neck, and he himself lost in thought. He saw clearly that all his

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M'Donner's distress and perplexity.He goes back to see his mother.

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infidelity arose, not from rational conviction of the understanding, but from the natural desire of a depraved heart to be freed from all fear of a judgment to come. He was again and again *almost* determined to follow the master's advice—return to his house, and, giving up entirely his controversy both with God and man, await submissively whatever might follow. Then pride, and depraved appetites and passions, would get the mastery again, and he would go on, determined to die rather than to submit to trial and imprisonment.

Presently he came out into the road, but the conflict still continued. Remorse, respect for the stern integrity of his friend, pity for his mother, and some faint ideas of the value of that peace of mind which the master had told him he could not obtain in any other way than by submission, would bring him to a stand. He would stop his horse, look back, then irresolutely move forward again.

"*I will go back,*" at length he exclaimed, with forced energy, as the thought of his helpless mother, hanging out her signal for him day after day in vain, rose to his mind, "*I will go back;*" and he turned his horse's head and trotted briskly toward his home. But the forced energy did not last long. The horse soon felt a slight pressure upon the bit. His movement slackened; the trot subsided to a walk; and yet the pressure upon the bit continued. Presently he felt himself reined up with his head toward the roadside; then an uncertain and irresolute drawing upon the right-hand rein, which turned his head away again; and, if his ear could have distinguished articulate sounds, he would have heard his master muttering, "No, I won't go back—I *can't* go back," in a tone of despair.

The unhappy man at length compromised the matter by determining, at any rate, not to leave his mother so; he would go and pay her one more visit. He knew that he

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 Visitor at the house.

M'Donner waylays him.

 Shubael.
 

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might linger about there for several days, and yet make his escape at any time, he was so well acquainted with all the by-paths through the woods. He accordingly returned by a circuitous course through the forest to the vicinity of his dwelling, and remained in the glens and ravines until nightfall.

Just after the sun went down, and when the shades of evening were drawing around his dwelling, he looked out from the wood, across the opening, to the window of the house. The cloth was not hanging out—the signal agreed upon between him and his mother indicating that she was not alone. Who could be there? He had great confidence in her scrupulous fidelity in complying with his directions, and therefore did not doubt that she had some visitor. He paused a few minutes, and then took a circuitous route around toward the road that led to the Falls, thinking that he might perhaps intercept the visitor on his return. He wished very much to ascertain who it could be, and he stationed himself accordingly in a place of concealment by the roadside, where he was himself entirely hidden by the thicket, but where he could see distinctly if any one should pass.

In about ten minutes he heard footsteps approaching, and in the shadow of the trees on the opposite side he saw the figure of a short, stout-built man moving along toward him with rather hurried steps. The moment he had passed, M'Donner stepped out into the road softly, and followed him, calling, at the same time,

“Colonel!”

Mr. Shubael, for he it was, started, and turned round abruptly, grasping his cane for an instant a little more firmly, and answered the challenge by calling, in precisely the same tone,

“M'Donner, is that you?”

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Shubael's conversation with M'Donner in the wood.

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"Is that *you*?" rejoined M'Donner; "you don't often honor me with a visit at this time of night."

"I have been to see if I could find out from the old woman where you were," replied Shubael, "but I could not get any thing out of her. You are crazy to loiter about here. They say they have got good proof, and if you are brought in guilty, it will be a ten years' business, at least, and that would about do you up for this world. You had better be off."

M'Donner said nothing in reply, but his blood boiled with indignation. The colonel, he reflected, had put him forward to this work; he had laid the temptation before him, and encouraged and urged him on, and had forced upon him all the work and all the danger, yet taking himself a full share of all the profitable proceeds; and now, when he was encompassed with the most imminent dangers, and ruin stared him in the face, his cold-blooded accomplice, instead of having a word of kindness or sympathy for him, or proffering the slightest aid, contented himself with telling him, with a sneer, that he had better be off.

M'Donner paused an instant, and then, to Shubael's astonishment and terror, broke forth upon him with a torrent of reproaches which made the cold-blooded hypocrite turn pale. "You drive me mad," he concluded; "'tis as much as I can do to keep off of you."

"And then be hung, instead of being imprisoned," said Shubael, repressing all outward signs of his fear, but yet slowly retreating along the road.

"Well, if I am to have twelve men upon me, I may as well give them something to do," said M'Donner, bitterly; "though, if I choose," he continued, walking up with a ferocious and threatening air, "I could chuck you down into a chasm close by, and in half an hour pitch in so many stones and logs that even the worms could not find you."

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Shubael and M'Donner walk along toward the store.

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Shubael was a calculator, though he often mistook in his calculations. He had thought that a tone of haughty arrogance was the best one to assume in talking to M'Donner so as to discourage intimacy and drive him away. But he was not aware of the chafed and irritated state of the criminal's mind; and as soon as he perceived that he had thus overshot his mark, he changed his plan at once.

"Come, come, Mr. M'Donner," said he, after a moment's pause, "you and I must not fall out. We have always been good friends. I am sorry for your difficulties, and I am sure I hope you will get out of them; but it looks rather dark, and it seems to me you had better not be seen about here much till this affair has had time to blow over a little."

Shubael's disposition to retreat, and M'Donner's to advance, resulted in their sauntering along slowly together in the direction toward the Falls. The colonel, feeling not quite safe, gradually quickened his steps, and M'Donner did so too, and they walked along for some time, talking together, until at length the angry feelings on M'Donner's side seemed to subside. Shubael found that new feelings of self-condemnation and new religious fears had been awakened in his mind, and thought it very important for his interest that these feelings should not continue. He was desirous that M'Donner should escape, for two reasons: there would be less danger of his own share in the work being discovered, and he hoped, also, that the business might be continued, if M'Donner were to confine himself to other parts of the country where he was a stranger. He intimated this, and spoke more plainly and openly than he had ever done before in respect to the whole transaction, for he knew there were no witnesses to overhear their conversation. He told M'Donner, at length, that he must cheer up—he must not be frightened at a little danger. "This is no great thing either," continued he, in conclusion. "You

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Shubael's opinions on religious subjects.Terry.

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passed counterfeit money, they say, but then you did not make people take it. It is a fair offer. They look at the bills and judge for themselves, and take them or not, just as they please. Let every one look out for himself, say I. That is what I have had to do, and I don't know of any other way to get on in the world. So cheer up, Mr. M'Donner. Don't let them make a Calvinist of you."

They took three or four steps in silence.

"Well, colonel," at length resumed M'Donner, "if you can make it out to be all right to cheat a poor girl like that one in the stage out of her money by giving her bad bills, for your sake I am very glad of it; but I can't. As to turning Calvinist, I begin to think that if there is a God and a hell, it is high time for such characters as you and I to know it."

"I have no objection to your believing in a God; I think that is very well; I believe there is a God myself; but as to hell, that's all moonshine," he added, in a tone of great contempt.

"You think so?"

"Think so!—I *know* so. There's hell enough in this world. I think we get our deserts pretty fairly as we go along."

"Then you've no fear of a judgment to come?" inquired M'Donner.

"No," said the colonel, "not a particle."

"And we all get our deserts here, as we go along?" inquired M'Donner.

"Certainly," said Shubael, with an air of satisfaction, pleased to see how entirely he was carrying M'Donner's mind along with him.

"Yes—yes," said he, musing; "that makes me think of Terry."

"Terry!" said Shubael; "what has Terry to do with it?"

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Shubael resolves to betray M'Donner to the officers.

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"Why, ten years ago he was a prosperous and happy man, and you have ruined him. All his property has gone through your money-drawer, every cent of it. You have got it by cheating him and giving him rum. You have cheated him so often that you have got so as to boast of it. You have broken his wife's heart, and killed I don't know how many of his children. And now you are a rich man, and Terry is a miserable vagabond, and you'll both probably die so; and all I have to say about it is, that if there is a God, and he don't some day call you and Terry up to settle accounts, then I think you'll be a lucky man—that's all."

Shubael winced and writhed as he walked along under this cutting rebuke. Most men would have been roused to furious resentment; but Shubael's anger was always of the typhoid type, and it vented itself in low, inarticulate mutterings. He began to think that he must give M'Donner up, and was considering what course it would be most for his interest to pursue, when they came out of the woods, and began to approach the colonel's store. The sight of the buildings encouraged the colonel, and he suddenly conceived a new design. "If I can be the means of getting him arrested," he thought, "it will be as well, or better for me, than for him to escape. It will prevent suspicion, and account for his enmity, if he should accuse me. I will try to entice him along toward the store."

When they came to the end of the wood, M'Donner was about returning, but Shubael told him that his mother wanted him to send her a little tea, and he asked him to go with him to the store and take it home. "You run a great risk," added he, "by being about here at all, but no more by going with me, now you are so far. I will go on just before you to see if the coast is clear."

M'Donner scrutinized his countenance closely, but saw no evidences of duplicity. Every feature was calm and im-

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Cunning plan devised by him to accomplish the object.

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movable. He suspected him, notwithstanding ; but he was nearly desperate : he cared very little whether he escaped or was taken ; and, besides, he knew he could at any moment strike into the woods and elude any pursuers ; so he walked on with the colonel, and cautiously entered the store.

A boy was there in charge during the master's absence. He was lying on the counter, but he sat up when the two men entered. The colonel appeared to be about to weigh out the tea, and sent the boy out to close the shutters for the night, talking all the time to M'Donner. M'Donner watched all his motions with the closest scrutiny.

"And now, Mr. M'Donner," said he, as he put a teacupful of tea into the scales, "I'll tell you what you'd better do. What is that boy about?" said he, interrupting himself, and listening to catch the sounds the boy made at the shutter. "He is doing that wrong. I'll just step out, and be in again in half a minute."

He came out from behind the counter, leaving M'Donner leaning against the front side of it, and went to the door. He began speaking to the boy immediately, and walked toward him, giving him directions in an audible voice. M'Donner crept across to the door himself on tiptoe with the step of a cat, and put his ear to the edge of it, so as, however, not to be visible from without. As soon as Shubael got to the boy, he heard him drop at once his directions, and say in a low tone, "Go to the mill, and tell them all to come over here as quick as possible, with as many hands as they can get ; tell them I've got M'Donner here."

The criminal crept back to his place again, so that when the colonel entered he was leaning against the counter in the same careless attitude in which he had been left. He paid no attention to what he had heard, repressed his indignation, and continued talking with his treacherous host in the same tone as before.



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The plan promises for a time to be successful.

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The store-keeper was as long as possible in weighing out the tea. He stopped continually to talk, and made delays of every kind. M'Donner at length, after a few minutes, moved carelessly toward the door, and stood where he could see any one coming from the mill, in order to guard against sudden surprise. But the necessary delays in getting together a suitable force there were so great that the colonel's pretexts were at length all exhausted. The tea was enveloped, tied, and after making as much delay as possible in bringing the ends of the string over the little knife-blade driven into the counter standard, the colonel at length drew them across it, and then laid the little bundle down, just as he began to hear a movement on the bridge.

"Now," thought he, "old fellow, it is all over with you." M'Donner himself heard and understood the movement too.

To make all sure, he invited his guest to walk out into the back shop, and take a little spirit before he went. There was a back door, but it was strongly fastened, and he thought, if he could keep him there until the party should approach and guard the front door, he could not escape. M'Donner seemed to accept the invitation, and followed Skubael behind the counter into the back room. The colonel, after pouring out half a tumbler of some of his choice spirits, looked up, and was astonished to see his guest standing near the back door with a great beetle in his hands.

"Mr. M'Donner!" exclaimed the colonel, in a tone of inquiry and surprise.

"I believe it is about time for me to go, and I will take the liberty of going out of your back door here. I see you have nailed down the hasp, and so I shall have to open the door in my own way."

So saying, he took hold of the handle of the beetle at its extremity with both hands, stretched out his arms to their

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M'Donner breaks away and makes his escape.

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full length, swung it once or twice near the floor, as if to give it an impetus, and then brought it up with prodigious force against the upper corner of the door near the hinge. It split and shattered the wood, tore off the hinge, and knocked out the corner, letting in a sudden flash of the evening light, which, however, disappeared again instantly as the door sprung back to its place.

"Stop, stop, M'Donner," cried out the colonel, retreating, however, a little toward the front store. "Don't break my door down. I'll let you out if you—"

His words were interrupted by another equally well-directed blow, which struck near the lower hinge, and the whole door flew half open, and rested obliquely with one edge on the ground. M'Donner pushed it open with his foot, and then pitched the beetle toward the colonel, who was retreating slowly backward. The head of it struck the floor just in front of him, and the handle flew over and grazed his knee.

"Good-by, colonel," said he; "next time you attempt treachery, try it on somebody that does not know you as well as I do."

So saying, he stalked off deliberately into the back yard, thence climbed leisurely over the fence, and walked across the field, while the colonel was rubbing his knee and recovering from his astonishment. That instant the party that he had sent for appeared at the front door, cautiously looking in.

"Come in—come here, quick," shouted the colonel; "he has escaped."

They ran around behind the counter one after the other, and crowded up to the back door just in time to see the tall form of the criminal slowly disappearing in the dark shadows of the woods. The colonel described the circumstances of the escape to the staring party, occupied, while

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The colonel wounded.M'Donner retreats to the mountains.

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he talked, in bringing back the door into its place, and re-adjusting the splinters, impelled by the universal feeling which leads us to put the fragments of a broken vessel together again, as if to see if they will not adhere as before. As usual, however, he found that the parts would not stay as he put them, and accordingly let the door and the splinters drop again to the ground. The party all then walked into the front shop, the colonel limping, and often putting his hand to his knee.

In the mean time, M'Donner made the best of his way along through the woods, by by-paths which he was well acquainted with, back to his own dwelling. After reconnoitering a moment cautiously, he went in. He laid the tea down upon the table. His mother took very little notice of his coming except to say that there had been a great many people to see him, but she did not know what for, and she wished that he would not go away so much. M'Donner learned, too, that the master had been there, and had been making some provision for his mother's wants, although he had refused to receive any of his money to furnish him with the means. He knew that it would not be safe for him to stay there long, as it was very probable that the party from the store might come after him; so, repeating his injunction to his mother to be careful about her signal, he went away.

Under his arm he had a small parcel of provisions which he had taken from the house. He went down into the ravine by his old path, and spread a rude bed for himself in a chasm among the rocks. As he lay down and composed himself to sleep, he closed his reflections upon the events of the day by saying aloud, "Yes, one thing is plain; if there is a God, there's a day of judgment coming, that the colonel may rely upon."

With this somewhat gratuitous commendation of an arti-

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M'Donner's watch.He continues to linger near his home.

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cle of faith to the colonel's consideration, and dismissal of it from his own, the outcast went to sleep. He spent several of the succeeding days in the forest, occasionally visiting his cabin when he saw that the way was clear. He kept a most vigilant watch against the officers who were seeking to arrest him, and several times saw them near his house or upon the road leading to it. They could not ascertain whether he had left the town or not, as his mother's reply to all their questions was that her son was at home, but she either could not or would not say any more.

M'Donner himself was intending every day to go away on the succeeding one. Still, he continued lingering around the spot, detained by some mysterious spell which he did not very well understand himself. In fact, various feelings influenced him. He did not like to leave his mother so utterly lonely and destitute, and hoped that something might occur to enable him to make some sort of provision for her. Then he felt a secret solicitude in respect to God and eternity. He could not help wishing to meet the master again, that the subject might in some way or other be renewed. When he found that he was thus remaining day after day, he removed his camp to those rocks upon old Hoaryhead which we have already described. There were several advantages in this position: it was entirely secluded, and it commanded a good view of the valley, and of the principal roads winding through it, so as to enable him to watch from his look-out all the movements which might be made in town; and then, again, in the wild chasms and recesses of the mountain, a force, if one should be brought against him, could easily be escaped from or resisted.

Under the shelter of the rocks M'Donner avoided the evening dews, but he was exposed to noxious exhalations still worse, perhaps, for the water percolated through the fissures around him, and the beds of rich green moss, though

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M'Donner falls sick in his cave.He watches the boat on the lake.

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light, and dry, and warm to the eye upon the surface, were like wet sponge below. "Ah!" said he, at one time, as he came to such a carpet of green and brown under a shelving rock, "here is a bed fit for a prince." He stretched himself upon it, but started up again immediately, with his clothes, wet and cold, adhering to his side.

The night before the boys made their excursion upon the mountain, he found himself unusually chilly; his head ached; now and then a dizzy, feverish sensation came over him, and a shooting pain darted from time to time through his chest or his limbs. During the night he was wakeful and restless. The next morning, when he rose and attempted to move about, he found that the pain in his chest increased. The slightest twisting motion of his body gave him great pain, his breathing was short and laborious, and he began to feel seriously unwell.

During the morning, while Fergus and his parents were gliding over the pond, he sat upon his hard couch, leaning his aching head upon a rocky projection, and watching the boat, which, from that height and distance, seemed a little insect slowly creeping over the glassy surface of the pond. He then, for the first time, began to feel the sadness and gloom of his condition. How ardently did he wish he were once more innocent and free. He could not get down the mountain, for walking only a few steps made him gasp for breath, and brought on a great increase of pain in his chest and side. He began to think he must die there alone, like a bear in his den, cut off from all sympathy, human or divine. Conscience brought up to his view all the sins of his life—his selfishness, and his pretended infidelity, which he now began to see was not mistaken opinion, but malignant feeling; it was not *ignorance* of God, but hatred of him. Once or twice, in the anguish of his soul, he cried out, "O God—mercy—mercy." Then, after a moment's

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He calls upon the boys to succor him.

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pause, he would say to himself, "What a fool I am to ask for mercy! The only chance for me is that there may not be a God. If there is one, he will not, he can not have any mercy for me."

Such was the poor criminal's situation when his eyes fell upon the two boys, standing out by the blueberry bushes at a short distance before him. He raised his head and beckoned. Fergus began slowly to obey the signal, and Gilbert, who at first had fled, stopped, and then followed cautiously at a distance.

"Boys," said M'Donner, as soon as they came near, "I want you to help me; I'm sick."

His words were broken, and interrupted by his short, quick breathing, and the boys stood looking at him with faces of great concern.

"What is the matter, sir?" said Fergus.

"A pain—in my side," said he. "Have you got—a knife—a sharp knife?"

Both boys' hands darted into their pockets, and out came a couple of specimens of cutlery, in appearance much what you might expect from such sources. Gilbert's was a jack-knife, old and rusty, with the great blade broken square off in the middle. Fergus's was still more odd in its exterior, as it had been rudely manufactured by George himself. It had a long, slender blade, with an edge and point in perfect order.

"This will do," said M'Donner, trying its point with his thumb; "I want to bleed myself."

The boys looked at one another anxiously.

"I should think, sir, you would rather go home," said Fergus, with a timid air.

"I can't get home," said the patient, as he slowly and laboriously rolled up his sleeve; "I can't walk so far." Then, as if speaking to himself, "If I only had a boat—and somebody—to row."

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Fergus and Gilbert form plans for conveying M'Donner home.

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"My father has got a boat," interrupted Fergus, eagerly, "and he can row."

The sick man made inquiries and learned all the particulars we have mentioned ; and at length it was agreed that one of the boys should go down and have the boat brought up a narrow creek, near the base of the mountain, and that the other should stay and help the patient, first in respect to his surgery, and then in getting down to the creek. M'Donner said he knew he could breathe easier when he had been bled.

Fergus at once offered to go down the mountain to carry the message to his father, but Gilbert was afraid to stay alone, and so he let *him* go down. Gilbert hurried away while the preparations were making, and after he had gone Fergus helped the sick man tie a handkerchief around his arm, and draw it tight. When all was ready, M'Donner accidentally noticed that Fergus began to look very pale.

"Ah!" thought he, "this will not do ; the poor boy will faint away as soon as the blood begins to flow."

To prevent this, which would occasion a very serious embarrassment, he sent Fergus off to collect sticks to replenish the fire. The air and exercise revived the boy, and he engaged in his work of rebuilding the fire with great ardor, glad to escape from witnessing so terrible a sight as an operation in surgery.

At length the patient slackened his rude tourniquet and stopped the flowing of the blood. He called Fergus. Fergus dropped the end of the great branch whose top he was just then laying upon the fire, and went in. He found the sick man very much relieved. He helped him bandage up the wound, and observed that he breathed more freely, and spoke without the constant gasping for breath which Fergus had noticed before. He rose and said that if Fergus would go along with him, he thought he could manage to get down to the pond.

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The boat comes.M'Donner is taken on board.

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They accordingly set off, Fergus in advance, with his pail half filled with berries. The sick man followed slowly, sustaining himself in the rough descent by two long staves which Fergus cut for him in the bushes. He paused frequently for breath, and once or twice sat down to rest. They went on, however, very successfully, though slowly, and at the base of the mountain turned off by a narrow path, which led down to a little landing on that arm of the pond where they had appointed to meet the boat.

The boat was not there, and M'Donner seated himself upon a log which lay upon the shore, while Fergus sauntered up and down upon the sandy beach, skipping stones or picking up smooth pebbles, but going every minute or two to his charge to ask him how he felt, and whether he could not do any thing for him. It was not long before Fergus's ear caught the sound of oars, and a moment after the bows of the little boat appeared around a wooded point of land at a little distance, and then the square, stout form of his father, plying the oars, glided into view, and immediately thereafter the figure of Gilbert sitting in the stern.

Fergus saw that Gilbert smiled and nodded, and his father looked around. A few minutes afterward the boat grounded upon the sand; the sick man stepped carefully in, followed by Fergus, and laid himself down upon some blankets which had been spread in the bottom of the boat. Fergus pushed off, and the little bark wheeled round and took its course across the pond.

George knew very well who his passenger was, and he did not attempt any conversation except such occasional inquiries as were necessary to guide them to the part of the shore where they were to land. After going nearly across the main sheet of water, they doubled a rocky cape, and stood for some time along a picturesque shore, presenting to the view a sandy beach, with a lofty forest beyond



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M'Donner is kindly nursed by his mother.

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it. He then turned up into a deep and still stream which here emptied into the pond, very similar in appearance to the one they had descended in the morning. They went on until their progress was stopped by a log bridge which crossed the stream, when the sick man stepped out upon the mossy bank, and with George and the boys walked slowly toward his cabin, which was very near. The exertion which the patient had made had brought on a return of his pain, and he moved very slowly. He could, however, get on, at any rate, as fast as his attendant, and in a short time they all arrived safely at the cabin door.

His old mother soon understood the case, and with George's help, who, like almost all invalids, was himself an excellent nurse, the patient was soon comfortably placed in his bed. But he seemed restless and uneasy. The exertions he had made had aggravated his symptoms, and his mind was ill at ease. A double anxiety was seated on his countenance—that of disease, and the more deeply-seated anguish of a troubled spirit. When all was arranged, he called George to his bedside, and in interrupted and broken language told him his situation. He said, in conclusion, that he had been a bad man, and he supposed there was no hope for him now, either for this world or another; but he said he had made up his mind not to resist either God or man any longer. "I give up," said he. "I have denied God all my life, but I am now compelled to acknowledge and to fear him."

George, in reply, told him there *was* hope for him certainly, and urged him to pray to God for the forgiveness of his sins.

"I have not the face to ask forgiveness, neighbor," said the sick man. "Such a man as I have been *must* be punished, or else there is no government at all. The colonel talks about God's being merciful," he continued, "but I

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His ideas of God.George promises to send for a physician.

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know better. If there is any God, he's *just*. If he should let such a man as the colonel beg off—" He left his sentence unfinished, and turned away.

"But if he is penitent—" said George, soothingly.

"I don't care whether he is penitent or not," interrupted the sick man, impatiently, and turning restlessly in his bed; "*he ought to go to hell*, and so ought I."

He spoke with terrible energy, and his wild eye glared at his visitor with a horrible expression of despair. George attempted again to show that God would forgive those who repented of their sins, but he made little impression on the sick man's mind. He wanted to know, he said, what signified repentance after the crimes were all committed, and life was gone, and there was nothing left for a man to do but to beg for mercy.

The truth is, the poor man was almost entirely ignorant of Christianity, and now his conviction of the existence of the Deity rested entirely upon the craving demand which the instinct of justice made for a moral retribution; and therefore, to maintain that the consequences of such a life of impiety and sin as his had been could all be averted by just asking for mercy now in this hour of helplessness and despair, was undermining the whole foundation on which his slender belief rested.

George was discouraged, and promising to send the physician to see him, bade the sick man good-by and went away. He walked slowly down to the bridge, attended by the boys, and there they all embarked and glided down the stream. At the mouth of it they came out upon the open pond again, and steered their course toward Gilbert's dwelling. As they passed round a low sandy point which projected into the pond near their track, they passed very near a field of pond lilies. The pads were sleeping luxuriously upon the surface, and here and there, between them, ap-

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The pond lilies.The boys gather a good supply of them.

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peared the conical bud, rearing its green and compact point above the surface. A few of the flowers were open, the expanded petals forming a white star precisely at the surface of the water.

"Father, may I shear her a little?" said Fergus, holding himself ready to turn his paddle, and with his eyes fixed upon the lilies.

The rower looked in the direction to which Fergus's eyes were turned, and replied, "You want a lily, I suppose; yes, but don't go in far."

The little helmsman bore down the handle of his paddle till the boat came round, and as they glided along through the pads, both he and Gilbert leaned over the side and seized every bud which came within their reach. Some of them broke off a few inches below the water; in others, the stem, after a long, elastic pull, parted far below, and they drew up the long, slender, and supple stem several feet in length; others still broke off close to the bud, and then the bud was thrown away to float upon its side over the little billows which diverged in long lines from the stern of the boat.

By the time they had passed through the field of lilies, the boys had each obtained half a dozen of the flowers, with stems of various lengths, which they coiled safely in the tops of their hats; the boat was then made to resume her proper course. They were soon approaching the opposite shore, and there the boys spied under the trees two female figures, apparently waiting for them. They were their mothers. Mary, finding that evening was drawing nigh, had brought every thing down to the landing, in order to save all the party the time, and her husband the fatigue, of a walk to the house. They eagerly asked the particulars of M'Donner's condition. They had known something of his character, and of the efforts which had been

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Fergus gives notice to the doctor.His present for Lora.

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made to arrest him, and they listened with great interest to George's account of his sickness and his conversation. "He has been an infidel," said George, "but he says he has been lately driven to acknowledge God and to fear him."

"My lesson has been a pleasanter one," said Gilbert's mother; "God has taught me to *love* him."

"And me to *trust* him," said Mary, "which is pleasanter still. Come, Fergus, jump in; we *must* go."

The boat was soon under way, and Gilbert and his mother watched it until it disappeared round the point. They then walked slowly up the pathway, and reached their home just as the sun disappeared behind a cloud that was beginning to rise in the west. The boat took its course along the shore for a quarter of a mile, and then Fergus landed and went to the doctor's. Fergus dispatched with great promptness the two items of business with which his mind was charged—one to summon the doctor to M'Donner's bedside, and the other to give Lora the pond lilies which he had gathered for her. One was in his view of about the same importance with the other, and both were transacted with great fidelity and dispatch. The doctor, seated at the kitchen window, received his message with a face of suitable seriousness and concern. Lora took her portion with a smile, seated upon the great stone step at the end door, eating her supper. She expressed no sense of obligation in words, but gave Fergus a large bite of her apple instead of thanks; and with his mind unburdened of his errands, and his mouth full, he set off on the run to return to his father and mother. The thunder was growling in the west when they sailed up their stream, but they reached home in safety before the cloud had ascended very far. The night was one of lightning, thunder, wind, and rain. All parties, however, slept soundly through the whole except Mary, and the poor patient in his lonely cabin. *She* watched the showers with

The storm.

M'Donner falls asleep.

Visit of the doctor.

wakeful eyes, and with fears which religion had softened and subdued, though it could not entirely remove them. Poor M'Donner tossed upon his bed in great anxiety and terror. Nature, which had been soulless and dead before, was now full of God; and to his imagination, aroused by remorse and distempered by disease, every flash and every peal which found their way to his excited senses were but the tokens of God's terrible displeasure. "Mother," said he, again and again, as the hours moved slowly by, "when *will* it be morning?"

At length, about midnight, the wild war of the elements began to subside. The wind lulled; the thunder, by degrees, died away, and flashes of light were no longer seen at the window. As the heavens became gradually calm and serene, some slight degree of composure returned to the sick man's mind, and at length he gradually sunk to sleep.

He did not awake until many hours after sunrise on the following morning, and then, as he opened his eyes, they rested on the countenance of a stranger, who stood looking upon him with a benignant smile. In a moment more he recognized the physician who had been sent for on the preceding evening.

"Ah! doctor," said he; and then looking around a little bewildered, he added, "I believe I have been asleep."

"Yes," said the doctor, putting his fingers to the patient's wrist, "you have been asleep a good while, your mother tells me. How do you feel this morning?"

"Oh, I don't know—seems to me I am a little better: but I don't know what they sent for you for. It will do no good to get me well."

"Why, how so, Mr. M'Donner?" said the physician, in a cheerful tone.

"Oh, it is a prison in this world and a prison in the

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M'Donner's conversation with the doctor.

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other, and it makes little difference which I take," he replied, turning restlessly in his bed.

"Oh no, Mr. M'Donner, don't talk so. You must keep your mind quiet and composed. This agitation and restlessness is the worst thing possible for you."

"Quiet and composed!" said the patient. "Oh, my God! if you had on your mind what I have on mine, you would not talk of being quiet and composed."

"Have you any *very* great burden on your mind?" said the physician.

"Only that I have been breaking all laws, both of God and man, all my days, and defying the Almighty, and now there is nothing before me but a jail in this world and hell in the next. Do you think that is a situation to lie quiet and composed in?"

He spoke these words with a terrible emphasis, though in a subdued and quiet tone, and his glassy eyes glared at his visitor; his head, half raised from his pillow, and his shaggy hair and eyebrows, and black beard, gave his countenance an expression of absolute ferocity.

The physician saw at once, from the whole aspect of the case, that the greatest danger to be feared was from the influence of a terrified and despairing mind in aggravating the febrile tendencies of the body. He knew something of his patient's character and present situation, and had led the conversation into this channel, thinking it possible that some recollection of crime might be weighing upon his spirit, and that he might be seeking an opportunity to unburden it. If this were the case, he knew that the first step toward recovery would be to relieve the spirit within. The replies given above led him to think that his patient's anxieties and fears arose from a more general apprehension of the anger of God in consequence of his life of ungodliness and sin. He accordingly hesitated whether he ought to

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The doctor prescribes for his patient.

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push the subject farther. He left the bedside, and walked several times across the room, hesitating whether it would be better to attempt to divert his mind from his spiritual condition, or to draw him out to the full expression of his fears, in hopes of removing them by the appropriate promises of the Gospel. He would generally have decided upon the former course with a patient whose mind was thus disturbed, but in this case he decided upon the latter. He thought that the sinner before him had been so ignorant of all religious truth, that bringing before his mind, simply and clearly, the way of salvation by penitence and faith in Jesus Christ, might have the effect of allaying his anxieties, and softening his remorse into penitence.

After asking a few questions in respect to his symptoms, he went to the table, and took a pair of saddle-bags which he had laid there when he came in, and raising the leather cover of one side, brought to view the necks and stoppers of a multitude of phials. From a recess among these he drew forth one or two papers and small boxes, and seating himself by the bedside, he began to prepare the powders which he intended to leave for his patient.

"Mr. M'Donner," said he, as he sat there, mixing with the point of his knife a white powder with a gray one, "I am sorry to find you so disturbed and restless in mind. I have understood that you have been an unbeliever."

"Yes," said he, "I have pretended to be, but I give that up."

"Do you?" said the physician; "what has led you to give it up?"

"Oh," replied the sick man, with a sigh, "it's no use. I can't keep my eyes shut any longer."

"Then why are you so disturbed in mind? If you really believe Christianity, you certainly find in it a remedy for all your troubles."

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Conversation between the doctor and his patient.

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"No," said the patient, "there is nothing there for me. The more truth there is in religion, the worse it is for me."

The doctor asked him why, and gently drew out his ideas by leading him on to the gradual expression of them. He found that remorse, and a sort of instinctive conviction of the justice of Jehovah, were holding complete possession of his mind. He asked him, in the course of the conversation, for the purpose of ascertaining his views more fully, what his ideas were in respect to God's mercy and his willingness to forgive. The reply was that he knew very well there neither was, nor ought to be, any mercy or forgiveness for him. He had been his Maker's declared and open enemy all his life, and now he knew he must be sacrificed—he must be made an example of. There was no help.

As he thus gave utterance to his feelings of despair, he tried restlessly one posture after another, and finally tossed his arms over his head, turned his face toward the doctor, who was silently going on with his preparations, and concluded thus :

"No, doctor, it is *impossible* for me to be saved now. Even if God should forgive me, I could not forgive myself. If he were to take me to heaven, I should carry hell there in my own bosom. If you could see what I have to look back upon, you would understand this. Oh, my God," he groaned out, "what recollections I have got to carry with me forever and ever!"

"And do you suppose there is no way to escape from this painful load of remorse?"

"*Suppose!*—I *know* there is none. Can I forget? or can I remember without remorse? No, it is not possible for me to be at peace again, unless I could actually end my very existence and begin anew."

The patient paused. The physician sat for some mo-



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The doctor explains the nature of Christianity.

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ments in silence, slowly and thoughtfully folding his powders in their neat paper envelopes. At length he seemed to have finished his work. He laid aside his materials, and turning toward the sick man, he said, with a deliberate and emphatic tone,

"Mr. M'Donner, you say you believe in Christianity, but it is my opinion you have not the remotest idea what Christianity is."

The patient lay still and made no reply.

"Either you know nothing at all about Christianity—nothing at all, or else I don't understand one word of what you have been saying, from beginning to end."

There was another moment's pause, and the patient faintly murmured, with another restless movement, "I don't know what you mean."

"Why, it is the very essence and plan of the Gospel to meet just such a case as yours. The Son of God was crucified for the very purpose of expiating just such sins as you have been committing. *You* need not be sacrificed; the sacrifice has been made already. That was the very object, exactly, of the sufferings and death of the Son of God, to make complete atonement for such sins as yours, and to save sinners in exactly the condition that you are in now—helpless, self-condemned, despairing, and miserable. Every single thing you have said as a reason why you must be lost, helps make your case exactly the one provided for by the Gospel. You never would talk so if you really believed Christianity. You are a Deist, not a Christian."

The patient gazed at his physician while he was speaking with an expression of bewildered astonishment, but he made no reply.

"And then what you said last—that you never could be happy again unless you could end your existence and begin anew—I should almost think you said that on purpose to

show me that you know nothing about Christianity at all, for that very thing is exactly what the Gospel provides for. You do, if you come and take Christ for your Savior, bring your past existence to a close, so far as all moral responsibility is concerned, and you begin a new life. The moment you become really his, you have, forever after, nothing to do with your former life. It is fully expiated by his atonement. You are *justified*. Sins which the soul feels are fully atoned for and fully forgiven, can never more give pain; so that you see the whole plan of salvation through Jesus Christ is exactly adapted to your case, and your case is exactly the one to be most immediately and perfectly reached by it."

Now the truth was, that these views, or, rather, the words describing them, had been familiar to M'Donner's mind for years, but he had never really formed any clear conceptions on the subject, and did not really consider the idea of an atoning sacrifice for sin as actually belonging to Christianity. In fact, it is very difficult for the human soul to realize this, until it first comes to feel deeply a sense of personal guilt, which always brings with it an instinctive craving for penal expiation. A system of mere naked forgiveness as a regular measure of a moral government will not even bear examination in theory, and in practice the guilty soul actually rejects it in its own case. Remorse, when once aroused, can not be quieted by offers of mere mercy alone. It demands expiation. It will not withdraw its sting from the heart which it has wounded merely from the prospect of impunity to the individual—it insists, also, on some measures for the vindication of violated law.

But to return. The patient seemed lost in thought a minute or two, and then said, incredulously,

"You don't suppose, doctor, that that is really true?"

"That is another question whether it is true or not. All

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*Lora gets tired of waiting and comes in.*

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I say is, that that is Christianity. That is the very essence, the sum, the whole point and peculiarity of it. If you don't believe that there is such a remedy for your case really existing, very well—only say that you don't believe in Christianity; don't pretend that there is nothing in Christianity to help you."

"Come in, child, come in," here interrupted M'Donner's old mother, who had been, during all this conversation, sitting in her corner at her work, taking no notice of what was going on at the bedside. The doctor turned to see the cause of the interruption, and observed Lora standing at the door, smiling, but afraid to come in. He had brought her with him in his chaise, and while he came in to see the patient, she had preferred to ramble about in search of flowers. But a child soon becomes tired of solitary play, and Lora sat upon a log near the house waiting for her father until she began to be impatient, and then came gently up to the door, to ascertain, with her own eyes, what had become of him.

"Come in, Lora," said the doctor; "you are tired of waiting, I suppose."

Lora retreated a little from the door, intimidated by the fierce-looking countenance of the patient, and the repulsive aspect of the room. The doctor rose and prepared to go. He held a little farther conversation with the patient, and gave particular directions in respect to the prescriptions he left, and then took his leave. In fact, the disease had been arrested by the patient's decided treatment of his case on the mountain. Some febrile symptoms had been brought on again, it is true, by his exertion and fatigue in getting home, but the doctor thought it pretty certain that if he could be kept quiet and composed in mind, he would soon be restored.

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M'Donner's reflections.He sends his mother after Almy.

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When his physician had gone, M'Donner lay upon his bed pondering upon what he had heard. He had never before realized distinctly the nature of the expiation for sin made by the Savior, though he had heard a thousand times the language by which it is described. This language now returned to his memory, and he began to see the possibility of a way of escape from the heavy judgments which he knew he had incurred as a subject of the government of God.

He lay still an hour or more, apparently lost in thought. At the end of that time he suddenly raised himself in his bed, sat up, and beckoned to his mother. She came to his bedside.

"Mother," said he, with a loud voice, in her ear, "I feel better, and I am hungry; won't you get me something to eat?"

She nodded, saying "I will," and went away to the fire; and instinctively—for a mother is instinctively a nurse—she put down some water to make some gruel. Her son in the mean time remained quietly in his bed, with his eyes open, and moving occasionally with an air of composed but intent thoughtfulness. In a few moments he beckoned to his mother again.

"Mother," said he, "while your water is heating, I want you to go and ask Almy to come here. Tell him to come quick."

"Yes," said she, "I will." And she drew a faded hood over her head and disappeared.

In about fifteen minutes she returned, and a few minutes after a young man entered, of rough dress and appearance, but of very cool and easy manners. There was a smile of mingled good-nature and self-complacency upon his countenance.

"Mac, my old boy," said he, walking up to the bed-

Almy comes.	Conversation.	He makes M'Donner a promise.
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side, "what's the matter? Laid up, hey? I'm sorry for that."

"I'm better," said M'Donner, "and I want your help."

"You shall have it, through thick and thin, fire and water. What's to be done?"

"I shall want you to go with me, and be gone two or three days."

"It makes no difference to me whether it is days or years," said Almy.

"Well, Almy, I want you to help me a day or two, and I'll settle with you for it; but I want a plain understanding. You will do just what I say?"

"Why—yes," said Almy, hesitating a little whether the degree of desperate violence which the criminal might be contemplating might not prove to be beyond his limits of hardihood. He was one of M'Donner's accomplices, and had often been away with him on strange expeditions, for which he had always been well paid. He knew, too, the circumstances in which the criminal was now placed, and thought it probable that he was meditating something in advance of all their former perpetrations. After a moment's reflection, he decided that M'Donner was as safe a leader as he could have in so dangerous a path, and he said, in a frank and decided tone,

"Yes, M'Donner, I'll go any where and do any thing *with you*, but you must not put me forward into trouble and keep out yourself."

"No," said M'Donner, "that is not my way. Now remember your promise. You are upon honor. Go and get your horse and wagon, and be here as soon as you can."

Almy went away. He turned down a narrow road through the woods, and, after walking a quarter of a mile, he came to a rectangular opening in the forest, in the midst of which, close to the road, stood his own very humble

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Almy catching his horse.Account of the doctor's drive home.

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dwelling, the outside covered with rough boards, whose color indicated a very recent age. He took a bridle from a little cow-house near, which he dignified with the name of a barn, and went, by a narrow footpath, among brakes, bushes, bogs, and stones, to his pasture. Here he found a rough, coltish-looking animal feeding among the hummocks, where a civilized horse would have starved. The animal raised his head and stared a moment at his master, and then turned around and trotted away, looking back as he went, first over one shoulder and then over the other. Almy followed him, cutting off his retreat to the right and left until he got him into a corner where two log fences came together, and there the poor beast, his retreat cut off and his sagacity exhausted, quietly submitted to the bridle.

He was soon harnessed into the wagon, and Almy, after disappearing a few minutes in the house, sallied out with a great-coat over his arm, which he threw in among the straw in the back part of the wagon. The rattling of the wheels echoed among the tall trees of the forest as he drove rapidly along, and in a short time he came up to M'Donner's door. When he entered M'Donner was dressed, and was just finishing his bowl of gruel.

But we must return to the doctor. He drove along a winding road which conducted him around the head of the pond, seated in his "sulky," with Lora upon a little footstool between his knees. One side of his saddle-bags was in the box, and the other projected from it, in front, under Lora's cricket.

When near the head of the pond, their road lay through a narrow gorge of the mountains, where they had to ascend, by a rough road, a long though gentle acclivity, with precipitous rocks on either hand. Up this ascent both Lora and her father were walking, the horse jogging on by himself in the middle of the road with steady step and head

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The doctor meets the officers of justice on the road.

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down, as if his little load of medicines was heavy. The physician and his daughter were here and there among the trees and bushes by the roadside, gathering flowers and berries, and loitering a little behind the horse, as they trusted to his sagacity to wait for them at the top of the hill. While thus situated, the sound of coming wheels attracted their attention, and turning up the road, they saw two rough-looking men coming rapidly down in an old and well-worn, but yet substantial gig. They slackened their pace a little as they passed the doctor's sulky, and observing the saddle-bags in front, they both exclaimed, "Here's the doctor now," and drew up suddenly.



THE DOCTOR AND THE POLICEMEN.

They were the officers hastening to arrest M'Donner, for the story of his return to his home the night before had traveled with the rapidity with which stories usually circulate among a thin population. Rumor, unlike sound, seems to be facilitated in its progress by the rarity of the medium.

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M'Donner and Almy.M'Donner explains his design.

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They stopped to inquire of the doctor whether he had been to see M'Donner, and how he was. He gave them the information they needed, and after considerable conversation, both parties pursued their respective course. The officers felt sure of their prisoner, but it is almost needless to say that when they arrived at the hut they found that the bird had flown; for at the time when they were driving up to the door, M'Donner was pressing on at great speed in Almy's wagon at the distance of several miles. Almy found him silent and reserved. He endeavored to draw him out into conversation, but in vain. Almy attributed his reserve to his sickness, and to the melancholy natural to his situation, and he endeavored to cheer him by a sort of rough and boisterous gayety, which M'Donner could plainly see was half affected for the purpose of "cheering him up." Any mirth is dissonant enough in the ears of dejection and sadness, but forced mirth is absolutely intolerable. M'Donner at last began to get impatient.

"Here we are, safe at Thornton's," said Almy at length, as a retired and solitary inn, on a by-road, came into view, where M'Donner had indicated his intention of passing the night. "To-morrow at this time you will be beyond the reach of 'em, so keep up a good heart. You'll have a merry life of it yet, old boy."

"Almy, I see you are all in the dark, and we may as well come to a plain understanding. I have no idea of getting away."

"No idea of getting away! What are you going to do, then?"

"I am going to deliver myself up."

"Deliver yourself up!" said Almy, raising his hands, whip, reins, and all in astonishment. "Mac, you are mad."

"That's just as you please to consider it."



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Almy's extreme astonishment.Further explanation of the plan.

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"But what *do* you mean?"

"I mean what, I say. I have had enough of guilt and crime. I suppose you will go on, but I have concluded to wind up and begin anew."

Almy turned toward him and looked him in the face with utter astonishment; but in a moment more, he concluded that his companion was quizzing him, and thought he would enter into the joke.

"And who are you going to deliver yourself up to?"

"To the sheriff of the county."

"And what do you suppose they will do with you?"

"The state prison, I expect, for some years."

Almy paused a moment in silence, and then threw his head back and burst into a long, loud, and apparently uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"That is a good one," said he, when he recovered his breath. Perhaps the reader may think there was no such very extraordinary wit in the thing, even if allowed to be a joke; but it must be remembered that Almy's intellect was not profound, and a very moderate attempt at drollery was sufficient to give him a great deal of gratification. He looked at M'Donner, and found his countenance unmoved except by a slight tendency to a good-natured smile.

"And what put this fine plan into your head?" resumed Almy, after a pause.

"*Remorse*," said M'Donner, with a solemn tone.

"*Remorse*?" repeated Almy, his countenance gradually assuming a more serious expression.

"Yes, remorse. I have been enjoying the sweets of wickedness, but I find I don't like its sting, so I am going to settle up my affairs. My crimes against the laws of the land I am going to expiate myself in the proper way; as to my sins against my Maker, thank God! they can be expiated in another way."

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Almy absolutely refuses to proceed.

M'Donner threatens him.

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Almy was completely sobered by the calm and serious, and yet determined tone with which M'Donner spoke these words. "Come, come," said he, "Mac, you are carrying the joke too far altogether."

"You will find it is no joke before to-morrow night," said M'Donner.

"Why, you don't really mean to say that you are going to deliver yourself up to the high sheriff?" said Almy again, drawing up the reins at the same time, and stopping the horse in the middle of the road.

"Yes, that is exactly what I mean to say."

"Then I don't drive you another step," said Almy, with an air of determination.

"Then I shall have to drive *you*—that's all," replied M'Donner, coolly, sitting, however, motionless as before, with his arms folded in the old plaid coat, which he had put on an hour before, when the sun began to go down.

Almy paused a moment, and started the horse on again, saying, "We may as well go on to Thornton's, now we are so near, but to-morrow I shall carry you back home again, that you may depend upon."

"And yet you promised upon your honor to do exactly what I should say."

"Did I?" said Almy; "well, I did not know that you were actually crazy."

M'Donner said no more, and they arrived at Thornton's. The night's rest refreshed him, and in the morning he found his strength and health decidedly returning. Just before they set off, he said to Almy, as they were walking out into the yard together,

"Almy, if you give me any trouble about going with me as you agreed, I shall just put you out of the wagon, you understand, in the first woods we come to, and drive on alone—that's all."

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Almy submits.

They call at a lawyer's office.

The interior.

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Almy looked at his athletic frame, and noticed the cool and determined manner with which he spoke, and concluded that his wisest course was to submit.

"Why," said Almy, "if I said upon my honor, I suppose I must go; but I wish you'd listen to reason and go off. I could get you out of harm's way in eight-and-forty hours."

M'Donner made no reply, and, mounting their wagon, they rode on. After a few hours they arrived at the shire town, their place of destination, and, by M'Donner's direction, Almy drove up to the door of a small square building by the side of the road, in the middle of the village. Opposite to it was a handsome dwelling, with a certain correspondence between its architectural appearance and that of the office, which indicated they were but parts of one establishment. Almy remained at the door with his horse, while M'Donner went into the office.

The door opened at once into a small room, which, small as it was, occupied the whole interior of the building. A table was before the fire, with newspapers, files of letters, and bills, and sundry law-books lying upon it. A few shelves of books, all in "law calf," were against the wall on one side, and over the wooden mantle-piece were zig-zag tapes nailed to the wooden wainscoating, holding writs, and memoranda, and letters of uncouth shapes and coarse superscriptions. At a desk, by a window, sat a very respectable-looking man, of elderly appearance, writing. It was, in fact, our old friend, Squire Wilton.

"How do you do, sir?" said he, addressing the stranger; "take a seat."

M'Donner sat down in a chair near the table, and laid his hat by his side upon the floor.

"Isn't it Mr. M'Donner?" continued the lawyer.

"Yes, squire," replied M'Donner. "I suppose I shall want some of your help."

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Conversation in the office with Lawyer Wilton.

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"I am surprised to see you here, sir ; I understood there were some proceedings against you."

"Yes, and I want every thing to be done lawful, and thought I should like to get you to look after my case."

"Have you got bail?"

"Yes—leg bail," said M'Donner, coolly.

"What! made your escape?" asked the lawyer, with a look of much surprise and interest.

"No, they have not got me yet."

"Not arrested! then how dare you be about here?"

"Why, to tell the truth, squire, I am tired of this kind of life. I am guilty, and I have concluded to deliver myself up. And I want you to look after my case a little, just to see that all is fair."

"But, Mr. M'Donner," said the lawyer, hesitating, and looking upon his client with surprise, "this is a strange business. I don't know that you are under any obligation to deliver yourself up in this way."

"I don't do it because there is any obligation."

"What then?"

"Because I am tired of this kind of life, and I want to have the punishment over, and then begin again, 'new.'"

Squire Wilton looked at him a moment in silence. He scarcely knew what to make of such an application. After a short pause, M'Donner resumed, and gave him an account of his first escape, his retreat at the Cliffs, his sickness, the visit and conversation of the doctor, and his subsequent determination "to settle up his affairs," as he called it, entirely and forever.

Squire Wilton sat in silence, slowly trimming with his penknife the top of his quill, and occasionally looking up at the speaker. When he concluded there was another pause.

At length, suddenly looking up, he said, "But why, then,

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Mr. Wilton promises to attend to M'Donner's case.

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have you left home at all? Why didn't you stay, and allow yourself to be arrested there?"

"Because," replied the criminal, "I want to have it plainly understood that I give myself up, of my own accord, when I was entirely at liberty. Do you suppose I would stay there to be taken like a rat in a trap?"

Here was another pause. At length the lawyer laid down his pen, and looking up to his client, said, with the air and tone of concluding the conversation,

"Well, Mr. M'Donner, I don't see but you are right—that is, if you are sincere; and I suppose I have no reason to think you are not. I believe you judge wisely. It is the only way by which you can lay any solid foundation for peace of mind and happiness. When your sentence shall have expired, you can begin anew, as you have said; otherwise, you would have impending retribution for a burden on your mind all the rest of your days. As a lawyer perhaps I should have given you different advice, but as a man I believe you have judged right. To suffer the penalty is the easiest and shortest way to terminate the terrible consequences of crime.

"And, Mr. M'Donner," he continued, "it is very well for you that there is another way for you to seek the expiation of your sins against God."

"Yes, sir," said M'Donner, taking up his hat, "I know there is, and that is what put it into my head to give up bad courses and be a new man. And I am in earnest about it. So I may depend upon you when my case comes on?" he added, going toward the door.

"Certainly," replied the lawyer. The client disappeared from the room, and the noise of the wagon moving from the door gave notice of his departure.

The lawyer shook his head as he returned to his work. "He seems to have some idea of justification through

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He thinks that the criminal's heart is still unchanged.

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Christ, but he does not appear really like a renewed man, after all."

It would be difficult to describe the almost imperceptible indications which attracted the lawyer's practiced eye, that the criminal's heart was still unchanged. There was a certain air of boldness and confidence in his mode of speaking, which seemed to be under just such a kind of restraint as his respect for the person with whom he was conversing might inspire. There was no appearance of the deeply humbled and softened spirit which a real change, wrought by influences from on high, always affords. Mr. Wilton saw very clearly what his client's plan was—to give himself up to justice, in order to satisfy the claims of civil society upon him, and to seek forgiveness through the expiation which Christ had made for his sins against the great moral government of God; and he thought he had really made an honest and sincere resolution to do both of these things. And yet he knew very well, that unless his very nature had itself been changed, there was no real security that either of the resolutions would be actually carried into effect. "At any rate," he concluded, "if he does not change his mind before he gets to the sheriff's, I shall have a singular case to manage."

In the mean time M'Donner and his driver rode on through the village toward the residence of the sheriff. It was a farm-house in a comparatively secluded position. When they arrived within half a mile of it, M'Donner dismissed his wagon, after paying Almy liberally for his services, and sending sundry messages to different persons in his neighborhood. Almy made many attempts to divert him from his purpose, but without any success. At last, when he was about to leave him, he begged and entreated him to go back, but all was of no avail. M'Donner seated himself upon a stone by the roadside, and watched the wagon as it slowly drove away.

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M'Donner proceeds to the house of the sheriff.

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M'Donner had been only confirmed and strengthened in his design by his companion's opposition to it. He could not possibly entertain the idea of being driven from any purpose by the persuasions of such a man as Almy. But now that Almy was gone, his mind, left to itself, swung slowly back to its own proper moorings. He could not help hesitating before taking the final step. After sitting irresolute for some time, he at length decided that he had gone too far to stop now, and accordingly he arose and moved slowly along the road. The conflict within increased as he proceeded. He had been driven to his resolution by remorse and fear, not drawn to it by personal affection for the Great Supreme. Of course, when his resolution was formed, and while he was taking the incipient measures for executing it, the storm within lulled, and the terrors of God's anger appeared less to him now than they did in his silent and solitary room, while he was under the workings of a dangerous disease. Liberty and future indulgence, too, looked more alluring now that he was in health and strength again; and he looked first at the sheriff's house, and then at the distant road winding away over the hills, and found it hard to decide between them. Certain pictures floated one after another before his mind, like the slides of the magic lantern; first a little cell, six feet by four, and a gang of stone-hammerers in a party-colored dress; then the interior of his dwelling, with his mother waiting, and wondering, to the end of her days, what had become of her son; then visions of indulgence in dissipation and vice in great cities, with unbounded liberty and ample funds; then came to his recollection the awful scenes of disease, want, and misery, which he had often witnessed, and which he had sense enough to know were invariably the termination of the career of crime. These and similar pictures were coming and going before his feverish imagination as he walked slowly

His doubt and perplexity.

A little girl comes to the door.

along, and it was not till long after he had passed the house that he finally made up his mind that he would, at all hazards, adhere to his plan.

He walked with a brisk and resolute step up the yard, and knocked at the door. The little girl who answered the summons said that her father was not at home, but was expected very soon; and she invited the stranger to walk in and wait a little while. M'Donner hesitated. His resolution was like a great bubble, which had been growing thinner and thinner, and verging toward its dissolution, while it still retained perfectly its appearance and form, and even increased rather



M'DONNER AT THE DOOR.

than diminished in size and beauty; so that when he approached the door, his mind was completely filled with what bore every semblance of determination, but it was a mere phantom, a shell—hollow and delusive, the substance being gone. It required but a touch to cause it to burst and disappear.

Or perhaps, more correctly, he was like a rocket slowly approaching the vertex of its path, its projectile force nearly exhausted, and strong earthly tendencies ready to draw it back with accelerated velocity to the ground. M'Donner's resolution was all but exhausted, and attractions of prodigious power were all ready to reassert their dominion



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Conversation with the girl.He determines finally to fly.

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over him. He turned around, away from the little girl, his mind poised in equilibrium, and just then his eye fell upon the baton of the sheriff standing in the corner of the entry—the painted badge of his office—the symbol of disgrace, and ignominy, and miserable solitude—of bolts, and bars, and gloomy cells of stone. It furnished just the touch necessary to burst the bubble.

M'Donner said hastily that he would not wait then, but perhaps would call again.

"I think he will be in very soon, sir," said the little girl, persuasively.

"I will not wait now, I believe," said he, half looking over his shoulder as he left the steps.

"Will you leave your name, sir?" said the girl, raising her voice, and stepping out upon the threshold.

"No consequence," said M'Donner, without stopping to turn round.

He was now decided. He walked on, desirous of avoiding all appearance of haste, but with feelings much the same with those of a child in the dark, who feels a mysterious fear of something behind him, but is determined not to accelerate his steps—his spirit pressed on in advance of his person. He soon reached a by-road, where he breathed more freely, and he rambled on until the shades of the evening brought him additional protection.

He procured a lodging at an obscure inn, and in the morning pressed on in his course. From the bottom of a deep valley he saw the road winding away before him up a long ascent. He walked slowly, for his strength was not yet fully restored. At the summit he sat down to rest, and almost instinctively turned his view toward his now distant home. The well-known outline of Hoaryhead, rising above the blue horizon, seized and held his eye. "There is the old hill," said he to himself, "as quiet and calm as

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He flies.His last look upon the summit of Hoaryhead.

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ever. And 'tis a pleasant valley that it looks down upon, after all ; but it's ruined for me."

He gazed upon it steadily for some time, and then rose and walked on with a melancholy air. During the day he occasionally obtained other glimpses of the mountain. It was, however, gradually sinking and fading from the view, and when its blue outline sank at last beneath his horizon, it sank never to rise upon it again.



# M'DONNER.

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"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."—*Rom.*, viii., 1.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE FERRY-BOAT.

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M'Donner making his escape.

His dress and appearance.

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It was about the middle of a quiet day in June, calm and still, that a rough-looking man, who had been walking along a solitary road, paused before a narrow path which opened from the side of the road into the thicket. He was coarsely dressed; a profusion of black hair escaped from under his cap, and his eyebrows were thick and shaggy. He had a stout walking-stick in his hand, and a pack upon his back; and after reconnoitering, for a moment, the by-path above referred to, he went cautiously in. It was M'Donner, now a criminal and a fugitive.

He followed the path down a steep descent—rocks, bushes, and fallen trees bordering it on either hand—until he came to the bank of a rapid river. It was a wild, unfrequented place, but M'Donner seemed to be in search of solitude; for he soon abandoned the path itself, and worked his way through the thick copse which covered the bank of the stream, until presently his farther progress was interrupted by a little cove formed by the mouth of a brook which here emptied into the river. He followed the bank of this brook a few steps, until he came to a small circumscribed spot, comparatively clear of trees. It was a little

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M'Donner seeks a solitary place in the wood for the purpose of disguising himself.

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rocky shelf, covered with a deep green moss. A precipitous hill arose behind him, and the deep, dark water of the cove seemed sleeping before. A short distance below, he could see, through an opening in the trees formed by the mouth of the brook, the rapid current of the river; and in the opposite direction—that is, up the brook—he heard occasionally a rumbling through the forest, made by a wagon or a cart passing over the bridge which led across it at the point where it was intersected by the road which he had left.

M'Donner had come to this seclusion in order to disguise himself. He unfastened the pack which he had upon his back, and selecting from its contents a suit of pretty well-worn clothes, very different in their cut and color from those which he had been wearing, he put them on. He then spread the handkerchief in which his bundle had been enveloped upon the ground, and laid upon it the clothes he had taken off. Upon these he laid a heavy stone, and then drawing up the opposite corners of the handkerchief, he tied them together, and tossed the whole out into the middle of the creek. It seemed to pause a moment at the surface of the water, as if there was a slight contest between the stone and the more buoyant contents of the mass, but it finally concluded to go down. M'Donner then unrolled a small paper parcel which he had taken out of his pack, and brought to view a pair of scissors, a razor, &c. He went down to the edge of the water, and making use of its dark but glassy surface as a mirror, he cut off a large portion of his hair, trimmed his eyebrows in a very neat and tidy fashion, and removed his beard and whiskers so skillfully as to give his countenance an altogether different expression from the one it had worn before. Then rolling up these instruments of his toilet again, he straightened himself into an erect military position, saying,

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He sees two horsemen crossing the bridge.

His alarm.

"There! let me take this kink out of my back now, and, two to one, Colonel Shubael himself would not know me."

After clearing away from the ground all traces of his having made the place his dressing-room, he worked his way slowly back to the road. Just before he emerged from the thicket, however, he heard a noise upon the bridge which has already been mentioned. He stepped hastily back. He knew that two men were in pursuit of him, and he had been diverted from what he wished to make his course on account of them. The route which he intended to have taken led him across a ferry over the river a few miles above the place where he now stood. But he knew that, if he crossed the ferry, his pursuers would have learned the fact from the ferryman, and would have probably pressed on and overtaken him. He accordingly came on down the river by what was called the river road, hoping that chance would, in some way or other, favor his crossing the stream.



M'DONNER AT THE BROOK.

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Conversation of the strangers.

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M'Donner forms his plans.

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When he heard the tread upon the bridge, he stepped back into the bushes, peeping through a loop-hole to watch the persons who were crossing. They were two horsemen. M'Donner did not know their countenances, but there was something about their air and manner, and in the jaded appearance of their horses, which convinced him that they were the men whom he had to fear. Just as they passed, too, he overheard one say to the other,

"I knew he would not go over the ferry; he can make his own passage any where upon a log."

M'Donner stood motionless and held his breath as the horsemen rode on. He then concluded to go back and cross the ferry, since the danger was past; and he accordingly crept along by the side of the road, generally just in the edge of the woods, saying to himself,

"Thank you for the hint about the log. That is a very good idea, if worse comes to worst; but, in the mean time, since now I can have my choice, I think I rather prefer the ferry. I shall go safe, I believe. In this dress I shall pass for a gentleman—though I don't half like shamming, after all; but then I am no worse than other people. All the world is a sham."

M'Donner crossed the bridge and pursued his way up the river road. He had not gone far before he heard the tramp of horses' feet, and the rumbling of wheels upon the bridge behind him. He looked round and saw a stage-coach coming along. He made a signal to the driver when he came opposite to him, and the driver reined up his horses.

"Can you give me a lift as far as the ferry?" said M'Donner.

"Yes," said the coachman; and M'Donner clambered up upon the box, and the coach drove on.

"I could have traveled the distance well enough, but I was afraid I should get caught in the rain," said M'Donner,

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He is taken up by the stage.

A storm threatens.

Squire Stock.

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pointing to some rounded masses of cloud in the west. "There is a shower coming."

These clouds were piled up in vast volumes of dark vapor, and soon after M'Donner had taken his seat the sound of the thunder began to be heard. A man put his head out at the side window, and in a testy voice wanted to know why the driver did not go on. "We shall all get drenched in the rain," said he, "before you reach the ferry-house, at this rate." Then, withdrawing his head, he went on complaining to the passengers within about the coach, and the horses, and the road, and "the whole concern," as he called it. The horses were at that moment walking up a gentle ascent, the reins lying loosely upon their backs; and as the driver did not seem inclined to spur them on at all, in consequence of his passenger's admonition, they continued to jog on afterward just as before.

"Who is that grumbler?" said M'Donner.

"That is Squire Stock, of Stockville," said the driver, touching up his horses a little as he reached the top of the hill. "He has been complaining and finding fault all day."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Oh, he's finding fault with the coach, and the driver, and the horses, and the fare, and the roads, and every thing else."

"I'd pitch him out of the stage," said M'Donner.

The driver uttered a sort of ejaculation, and replied that he did not want to have any difficulty with the man.

"Let me get inside," said M'Donner. "I'll smoke him."

"No, no," replied the driver, gently snapping his whip at his off leader's ear, "no; you'll only get yourself and me into trouble. He's a great man. He is one of the most respectable men in Stockville."

"One of your aristocrats," said M'Donner.

"I don't know," said the driver; "aristocrat or demo-



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The driver's account of Squire Stock.He accosts M'Donner.

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crat, he is a very good sort of a man, only he is a little apt to get out of humor sometimes when he's a riding. He's a professor of religion."

The driver himself was a very good sort of a man, though of a timid turn of mind, and not very remarkable for his intellectual qualities. He stood quite in awe of his passenger's rank and standing, and particularly of his pretensions to piety. So he bore all his ill humor very patiently, and a few minutes after the above conversation he drove up to a solitary tavern which stood by the roadside. M'Donner descended from the box, and the driver opened the door to let the passengers get out.

"How long are you going to stop here now?" said the squire, in a querulous tone of voice, as he stepped down, with an air of considerable importance, from the coach door. M'Donner stood near, surveying him from head to foot.

"Only a moment—to change horses," said the driver, drawing the ends of his reins through a part of the harness of one of the pole horses, "though I stop here; I don't run any farther."

"Run!" said Squire Stock, in a tone of ludicrous contempt. "Do you call the jog you have been coming on running? I should like to see your *walk*," he said, moving at the same time toward the door of the tavern. As he passed along he encountered M'Donner's gaze, and, struck with the strongly-marked expression of his countenance, he involuntarily stopped, and looking him in the face a moment, said,

"'Servant, sir."

"Yours, sir," responded M'Donner. "You don't seem very well satisfied with your accommodations on this route."

"Satisfied! No. Poor road, poor coach, poor horses, poor driver, nothing good but the price; and that is high enough to make up for all other deficiencies."

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Conversation about the affairs of the stage company.

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"It's an imposition," said M'Donner.

"Yes, a vile imposition."

"How much do you suppose this stage company divides?" said M'Donner.

"Divides?" said the squire, surprised at hearing the language of the stock-market from a man of M'Donner's appearance.

"Yes, divides," said M'Donner; "with such high prices, and cheap coaches and teams, they must make good fat dividends out of us passengers."

"Oh, the stock is good for nothing." So saying, the man pressed on into the tavern.

"You hooked him there," said the driver, timidly, looking up from the trace of one of his leaders which he was then hitching to the whipple-tree.

M'Donner winked in reply, but said nothing. The driver was mistaken. The squire was *not* "hooked." With the usual blindness to the rights of others which characterizes selfishness, he did not see the inconsistency which M'Donner had exposed in his charging the stage proprietors with imposition, when, with all their economy and care, they could not make out an income from their business. The fact that the stock was good for nothing was a complete vindication from all his charges against the cheapness of their equipages on the one hand, and the amount of their charges for fare on the other; and yet the squire condemned the stock with a tone and air implying that it was only another triumphant charge against the "whole concern," as he called it. A vague feeling of respect for his strange questioner, however, was left upon his mind as he went into the house, and this feeling was still stronger in the minds of the other passengers, who had seen more clearly the point of M'Donner's inquiry. The squire took occasion to ask the driver privately, before getting into the coach

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M'Donner takes a seat inside the stage.The passengers.

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again, who that man was who rode outside with him, and the reply was, of course, that he did not know ; he was a chance passenger that he had picked up upon the road.

When they were ready to set off again, a fresh coachman mounted the box, and as the cloud which had attracted M'Donner's attention before had now advanced very far up the western sky, he got inside and took his place upon the front seat. A corner of the back seat was occupied by a neatly-dressed female, with a small boy in her lap, apparently her child. The boy sat so that he could look out at the window. He wore a blue jacket and a plain straw hat, and he had an uncommonly mild and pleasant cast of countenance. His mother's eye had a serious but beautiful expression, and it rested, generally, with a look of contentment and happiness, upon the bright boy upon her knee.

Soon after M'Donner was fairly seated, the new driver began to call out, "Stage is ready," and then to blow his horn for Squire Stock.

"I wonder why he don't come," said a youthful voice at M'Donner's side.

"'Sh! Edmund," said the lady.

M'Donner turned his eye around, and saw that the speaker was a lad of fourteen or fifteen years of age, who was sitting in the corner next to him, and opposite to the lady.

"But, mother, he has been fretting all the afternoon because we have come so slow, and now he is keeping us waiting here, and it's beginning to rain, and we have got to cross the ferry!"

"And he's one of the men," said M'Donner, "that pretends to love his neighbor as himself."

At this instant the squire appeared at the door. He walked out coolly and deliberately to the coach, and stepped in. He held an ivory-headed cane in his hand, and

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The curtain must be put down.M'Donner attends to it.

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wore a ruffle in his bosom. He sat down in his corner seat, looked around with an air of some complacency, and then, just as the driver was setting off, he called out,

"Here, driver, hold on—hold on! Put this curtain down; it's beginning to rain already, and we shall have it pouring in, this side, in streams, pretty soon."

"I'll put it down," said M'Donner, "while he drives on, for this lady is in haste, as she wants to cross the ferry to-night, and it is getting dark."

"Better let the driver put it down," said the squire, as M'Donner reached up to unbutton the curtain.

"Drive on," said M'Donner. The horses sprang off into the road and trotted on. M'Donner fastened down the curtain carefully all around, with an air of great deference to the gentleman and regard for his comfort. To all appearance, selfishness seemed to reign in the Christian's heart, and benevolence in the infidel's; but, so far as the last is concerned, the appearance was delusive. M'Donner's motive was far from being to promote the comfort of his fellow-traveler. He wished only to attract his attention and awaken some little interest for himself in the traveler's mind, in order to expose him more fully to the sting which he was preparing to inflict upon him.

As the rain and wind increased, it became necessary to put down the other curtains, which M'Donner and the lad effected without stopping the coach.

The road now began to lie nearer the river. It ascended, at the same time, so as soon to be at a considerably higher level. A precipitous bank, covered, however, with tall forest trees, lay between the road and the river, and on the other side there was an equally precipitous acclivity. These slopes, between which the road found a narrow and precarious way, became more rough, and rocky, and bare as they proceeded, and the squire began to look out of the

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Squire Stock's uneasiness and discontent.Edmund and Georgie.

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little glass window occasionally with a sort of nervous expression of countenance, which M'Donner watched with great interest.

"An ugly place, this, along here, sir," said M'Donner.

"Yes," said the squire, shrinking over to the centre of the coach as it canted a little toward the river. "What has he come this road for? We shall certainly all go over into the river before we get through." He let down the window, and called out in a loud and impatient voice to the driver to take care, or he would have them all over the precipice. The wind and rain burst in at the opening, so that he was glad to put up the window again; but he kept continually reaching forward to look out, uttering various exclamations of fear and irritation as they approached, at times, nearer than usual to the brink of the precipice.

In the mean time, Edmund, at his mother's request, began to put down the curtain which was opposite to her, and while he was doing it, the little child who was sitting in her lap said, in a tone of very gentle expostulation,

"But I can't see, Edmund, if you put the window down."

"Yes, Georgie," said his mother, "it must be put down, or it will rain-upon us."

Georgie said no more, but turned his face away from the window, and his mother, lifting him from her lap, placed him upon the seat, between herself and the squire. He began gently to sing, in a low tone of voice, the words of some hymn. Then he leaned over toward his mother, and she, finding that his voice was gradually growing fainter, and his head was beginning to rest heavily upon her side, took off his hat, and then let his head sink gently into her lap, his little feet hanging down from the seat before.

It was now nearly dark, and the wind and rain continued. There had been but little thunder, and the storm was not very violent; still, the prospect was rather discourag-

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The coach breaks down.Alarm of the passengers.

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ing in regard to crossing the ferry. Mr. Stock's anxiety and impatience increased continually. He wished that he had not come in the stage—he might have known better. It was such a vile road, and then it was so excessively unlucky that the rain-storm had come up just at that time. He was sure they should meet with some accident, for ill luck always came in a lump, and he had had nothing but ill luck all day.

He had scarcely finished these words, when all his predictions were confirmed by a sudden and violent lurch of the coach into a rut; instantly following it there was a crash, and down came the corner of the vehicle in which he was sitting to the ground. He shouted out, calling upon



THE BROKEN STAGE.

the driver to "hold on," and to "open the door," and vociferated twenty other things in a breath. Georgie was thrown over upon the squire, and, opening his eyes, looked

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Repairing the damages.Situation of the coach.

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around and asked what they were doing. M'Donner had the window down in an instant, and, reaching out his arm to the door-handle, he opened the door. Squire Stock pushed out before him, M'Donner following.

"It is only a wheel off, madam," said M'Donner, in a moment, to the lady, who was preparing to follow; "you had better keep your seat."

"It is the merest chance in the world," said the squire, "that we did not go over the precipice, coach, horses, and all. Where's my umbrella? Madam, will you hand me out my umbrella? It's behind you, on the back seat. And, Mr. Driver, what are you going to do now, I should like to know?"

"The axle-tree is broken, isn't it?" said M'Donner to the driver, as they both stood looking under the coach.

"Yes," said he, "close to the wheel. We must get a rail."

The usual substitute for a wheel in such cases was now to be rigged under the coach before the passengers could be again seated in their places. While M'Donner and the driver were at work procuring and fitting in the rail, Squire Stock standing by with his umbrella over his head, the lady looked out at the window on the lower side of the coach, which had been left open, and she felt greatly awed by the wildness of the scene. They were not far from the brink of a steep and rocky precipice, and at the foot of it she could hear the waters of the river gurgling rapidly along; the sound mingled with the howling of the wind and the driving of the rain against the window upon her side of the coach, which was now turned upward, and was, of course, more exposed to the storm. It was quite dark, but she could see the outlines of the forest trees relieved against the sky, and the glancing of the water in the river below. The driver's lantern, too, which he had taken from

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Conversation between Squire Stock and the lady passenger.

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the coach, threw a strong light upon the road, the bank, and the forms of the men as they were at work fixing in their rude substitute for a wheel.

She pressed little Georgie more closely to her as she looked out upon the scene, and addressed her thoughts to her Savior, whom she felt to be near. It was not a prayer, exactly, that she mentally offered, nor even a *wish* for protection, nor was it a mere feeling of resignation to his will. In fact, it was not much more than a mental look toward him—a happy, confiding recognition of his presence, and of his entire control over all the circumstances of her condition.

At this instant, Squire Stock, who was then holding the lantern to light the two men at their work, turning round a little, noticed her at the window.

"'Tis a horrible night, this, madam," said he, by way of varying the scene by a little conversation.

"It does not rain quite so fast as it did," said she, "I believe."

"Fast enough, at all events; and it blows: the boat can't cross such a night as this; and what we are going to do in the ferry-house all night, I don't know. And then I was to take the stage on the other side at four o'clock in the morning. This storm is the very worst thing that could happen for me, just at this time."

The lady did not reply. The remarks did not accord with her feelings, and she was silent. Edmund asked her, in a low tone, whether she was going to cross the ferry that night.

"If the boat goes, we must."

"I don't want to go to-night, mother," said he.

"If the boat goes, it will be best for us to go," she replied, quietly.

"But it will be very dangerous," said the boy, "*I think.*"



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The mother and her son.

The coach moves on again.

The ferry-house.

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"The ferryman can judge better than we can, and he won't go if it is not safe."

"But it seems to me it *can't* be safe," said Edmund. "How dark it is, and how the wind blows!"

"It is a bad night, I know, but we must not be concerned. It was our duty to come, and now it is our duty to go on in the regular way. If danger comes in the way of our duty, we must meet it."

"I should think it was duty to go out of the way of danger."

"Yes, that is true; if we foresee any real, serious danger in our way, we ought to avoid it; but I don't see that there is any here—that is, if the ferryman says he can go over. The great danger will be in our apprehensions and imaginations; and if our reason tells us we are in the right way, and we have proper trust in God, these anxieties and fears will be stilled."

At this moment they felt the back of the coach rising gradually, as if they were heaving it up behind. The rail was adjusted under it, one end resting upon the forward axle-tree, and the other extending away out behind and resting upon the ground. The end of the hind axle-tree which had lost its wheel was then let down to the middle of the rail, where it was supported in such a way as to allow the coach to move slowly on without disturbing its position. The passengers then resumed their seats, and the coach proceeded slowly and cautiously a mile farther, until it drew up at the door of the ferry-house.

The ferry-house was a small building, intermediate in its appearance between a dwelling-house and a shed. It stood at a very short distance from the water, and was far from presenting an inviting aspect to our travelers. They, however, got out one by one, and went in at the door. There was a wagon near the door, and, just before the stage

Scene in the ferry-house.

Danger of crossing the river.

drew up, the man who came in it was holding a discussion with the ferryman about crossing. The ferryman had been unwilling to make the attempt, and the traveler had been urging the necessity of his getting on, when this large addition to the party arrived.

They all went in. The ferryman's wife found a seat for the female passenger near a small fire which was burning in the great fire-place; for as the room answered the double purpose of parlor and kitchen, the spacious hearth was in use all the year round. The fire was now really a source of comfort, for the travelers were wet, and even a little cold. Georgie opened his sleepy eyes, and gazed with a bewildered air upon the objects around, while his mother turned her attention at once to the conversation which was going on at the door in respect to crossing the ferry.

"I suppose we can go across," said the ferryman, "but it is bad weather just now. We had better wait half an hour or so; it may clear up. It is only a thunder shower."

"The wind is hauling round to the northeast'ard, and it will end in a blow," said M'Donner. "I don't believe there will be a better time to cross for eight-and-forty hours than now."



SCENE AT THE FERRY-HOUSE.

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The wire ferry.Conversation between Edmund and his mother.

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"Why, you can't cross now," said Squire Stock. "You can't see half a boat's length ahead."

"Oh, this is a wire ferry," replied the ferryman. "We don't need to see. I don't mind the darkness, but I suppose it blows pretty fresh on the water. It might strain the wire."

"You had better not go," said the ferryman's wife to the female passenger. "We can give you lodging here, if you will put up with our fare."

"Thank you," she replied. "Your fare would be good enough, but my father is going to meet me at the tavern on the other side, and he will be very anxious if I do not come. I think I had better go, if the boat goes."

"I wouldn't go, mother," said Edmund; "it is a terrible stormy night."

"I don't think there is much danger."

"You admit there is some?" said Edmund.

"Yes," said she, "there is some."

"Then why do you go? What's the use of going into *any* danger?"

"Why, we are always in some danger; and I don't think it is best to alter our regular course on account of danger, unless there is some solid reason for believing it to be serious. Now there is every probability that we shall go over safely, and in fifteen minutes be at the tavern with grandfather."

"But we *may* not go over safe, and then you will feel sorry you did not stay here."

"No—at least we ought not to be sorry. If we decide now to do what, on the whole, seems wisest and best, we decide as God wishes us to decide, and we do what he wishes us to do; for it is plain he wishes us to do it by his placing us in circumstances where it appears to be our duty to do it; so that, in all such cases, we ought not to regret

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M'Donner falls into conversation with the squire.

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the decision afterward, whatever difficulties it may get us into."

"Do you think so?" said the hostess. "Now it seems to me, if I should go over the ferry to-night, and if any thing should happen, I should be sorry I went."

"I think it probable I might be too, but it would be wrong nevertheless, because that would be being sorry that I did what God made it my duty to do."

Edmund was not quite convinced that it was best to go, but he had no reply to make to his mother's reasoning, and he was silent. The company at the door dispersed; the ferryman and one or two others went down to the shore to get the boat ready; the squire and M'Donner came toward the fire, and Edmund, by his mother's direction, opened a carpet bag and took out a cloak, and then put the rest of their baggage together.

"Well, squire," said M'Donner to his fellow-traveler, as the latter seated himself before the fire, and extended his feet out upon the great flat stone that formed the hearth, "you have had a hard time of it."

"Yes," said he, "and I am afraid the worst of it is to come."

"Well, there is one thing we must admit, squire, that in some such vexatious times as these, we should get along a little more comfortable in our minds if we were only Christians."

"What?" said the squire, turning his face suddenly upon him with an expression of surprise.

"Why, if we could only swallow the doctrine of a superintending Providence, as they call it, it would be a rather comforting doctrine when a man gets into such a predicament as we are in. It would help him keep easy, and quiet."

"What do you mean, sir? Do you take me for an Atheist?"

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The squire is proved to be practically an Atheist.

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"Yes, you *are* an Atheist, are you not?"

"An Atheist!"

"Yes. Some people don't like that word; but," added he, in an inquiring tone, "you don't believe in a God?"

"Yes, *indeed* I do," said the squire, in a tone of great seriousness and emphasis; "most certainly I do."

"You do?" said M'Donner, looking down upon him incredulously; "and that he takes any notice of what is going on in this world?"

"Certainly," said the squire, in a tone of the greatest decision, "of every thing—he regulates and governs every thing."

"And he arranges and regulates every thing that happens to us, every day?"

"Yes."

"And has been following you and I along to-day, knowing what has happened, and arranging it all, and intended that we should pass through it all?"

"Why, yes," said the squire, though he answered a little more faintly than before. He began to see the point to which this extraordinary dialogue was tending. Before, however, he had time to rally his thoughts, and prepare for either a defense or a retreat, M'Donner had finished his queries, and drawing himself up, and speaking with that tone of natural emphasis and dignity which a man of his marked and decided character spontaneously falls into when his powers or emotions are aroused, he wound up the conversation by saying,

"Well, sir, if those are your sentiments, you've taken what I should call a pretty droll way to show 'em out for the hour and a half that I've had the honor of being acquainted with you. I don't know much about these things, and all I have to say is this, that if there is a God who has been leading you along to-day, and watching over you, and

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His reflections on the subject.The whole party go down to the ferry-house.

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you knew it all the time, he has been watching the most obstinate and barefaced rebel in all his kingdom."

So saying, M'Donner stalked off out of the house.

Nothing could exceed the tumult of feeling which took possession of the traveler's soul at this unexpected charge. He was thunderstruck. He was perfectly confounded. Indignation and anger at the rudeness of the assault that he had received were the feelings which first overwhelmed him. These soon gave place to self-reproach, as conscience, aroused by the severity of the cutting reproof which he had received, testified to its justness, and added her sting.

"Is it possible," said he, "that I have been passing for an Atheist—that I have been setting an example of open rebellion against God and his providence in this public stage-coach—and before these children?" he added, as his eye fell upon Edmund and Georgie, who were sitting near their mother at the side of the fire.

There was a pause of a few moments, the woman not knowing what to say under circumstances so singular; and Squire Stock himself was perfectly confounded and speechless. The awkward silence was at length interrupted by the ferryman appearing, to inform them that all was ready at the boat.

The mother arose, and, taking Georgie in her arms, proceeded to the door, followed by Edmund with an umbrella. She here stopped to wrap herself in her cloak, and then she followed Squire Stock out into the storm. He offered to carry Georgie for her, but she declined his offer, and they walked down to the water's edge. It was very dark, and the wind howled loudly through the tops of the trees, but there was not much rain falling, and they hoped that the weather might soon change.

The ferry-boat was a large, square, flat-bottomed boat, and it lay with one end upon the shore. Two posts were

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Description of the apparatus.M'Donner's setting-pole.

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set into that side of the boat which was up the stream, with deep notches in the upper ends, and through these notches there passed a large wire, of about the thickness of a quill. One end of this wire extended to the shore, where it was securely fastened to a strong post set into the bank, though of course this part of the fixture was now enveloped in darkness. At the outer end of the boat, the wire passed directly down from the top of the post at that end into the water. The passengers took their seats upon benches in various parts of the boat, the wagon already mentioned having been placed in the centre. When all was ready, the ferryman and M'Donner began to push the boat off with long setting-poles, and as she slowly moved out into the stream, she was guided by the wire, which, by her motion, ran through the notches in the tops of the posts which have been already described; for the outer end of the wire, which descended from the foremost post into the water, passed along over the bed of the river, and was secured to a post in the opposite shore. The ferryman, then taking in his setting-pole, went to the foremost post, and grasping the wire as it came in there, walked along the edge of the boat to the stern, pulling upon the wire as he went, and by this means he urged the boat slowly along. Thus they commenced their somewhat hazardous voyage.

M'Donner put down his setting-pole as the boat moved on into deep water, and took his stand near the wagon, where he was in some degree sheltered by it. Before him sat Edmund and his mother, the latter holding little Georgie in her lap, and the former sheltering the whole group as well as he could by a large umbrella, which he held with some difficulty over their heads, the wind and rain driving furiously against it. M'Donner heard the gentle sound of the mother's voice, who was talking in an under tone to Georgie, to cheer and amuse him in the dismal voyage, or

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M'Donner talks with the woman.She understands the danger.

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else to afford herself the relief of something like occupation. "If I believed there was any such thing as trust in God," said M'Donner to himself, "I should think that woman might feel it. She has been as quiet and gentle as a lamb all day. She does not know what danger we shall be in when we get fairly into the current, or she never would have come."

He felt a strong curiosity to know whether the apparent quiet and contentment of the group arose from ignorance or stupidity, or whether there could be any honest religious principle from which real peace of mind could spring. While he was thus musing, the woman raised her head a little, and looked up from under the umbrella, and seeing him standing there, she asked,

"How do we get along, sir?"

"Slowly, ma'am," replied M'Donner, "but pretty well. We have not got into the current yet." Then, after a moment's pause, he added, "I should have thought, ma'am, you would not have liked to come out on the water such a night as this."

"I could not help it very well," she replied. "I expect my father on the other side, and suppose there is no great danger, if the wire does not give way. There will be a heavy strain upon it when we get into the current, I suppose. I see the wind blows right down stream."

M'Donner saw that she understood perfectly the nature of their situation. He hesitated a moment about saying what arose to his lips, for it seemed cruel to say a word that might tend to excite or increase her fears; but the desire to explore a little farther the real state of her mind conquered, and he added, hesitatingly,

"The wires of these ferry-boats do give way sometimes, I'm told."

"Not very often," she replied, "though they do sometimes."



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Further conversation between the woman and M'Donner.

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"Well, now, suppose, ma'am, the wire should give way to-night—such a thing is possible, you know—and we all go down the rapids—what can you do? We men can make shift to get along somehow or other, in the water or out, but what can you do?"

She did not answer. M'Donner observed that she pressed little Georgie to her bosom more closely than before. After a moment's pause, however, she said,

"Yes, I *am* helpless as a child, I know, but I am easy about it. After what you said to Squire Stock, I suppose you will not believe me; but I trust myself entirely to God, just as Georgie here trusts himself entirely to me. See! the dear little fellow is asleep now. He sets me an example."

"Are you traveling far, ma'am?" said M'Donner, after a few minutes pause.

"I am going to the Lake with my father; it is about seventy miles. How far are you traveling yourself, sir?"

"That is more than I can tell," said M'Donner. "I want to get work somewhere."

"My father is often hiring men," said she; "perhaps he would hire you, though I don't know that you would like him. He is a religious man."

"I don't like such hypocrites as the one we had in the coach to-day," said M'Donner.

The hypocrite, as M'Donner termed him, seemingly without much injustice, had been standing at the bow of the boat, watching the progress of the wire as it came up rusty and dripping from the water, and ran through the grooves, or, rather, the deep notches which were cut for it in the top of the forward post. The ferryman kept steadily pulling at the wire, and Mr. Stock found a temporary relief from the burden of self-reproach in watching it, by the light of the ferryman's great lantern, as it rubbed through, and es-

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The boat goes out into the stream.Operation of the wire.

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pecially in noticing the knots by which the different lengths of the wire were united. These knots were made as snug as possible, and the ends of the wire coiled around very closely, so as to prevent any projecting angle or end from catching in the posts. These knots came out of the water at pretty regular intervals, and Mr. Stock watched their progress as they seemed to creep up, run through the notch, and glide away into the darkness behind.

When they got into the current, the ferryman went to the stern of the boat, and taking hold of the wire with both hands, he cast it off from the notch in the top of the post at that end, and threw it overboard, as it were. The boat immediately swung round; the stern, now released from the wire, drifting down the stream, and the whole pressure of the boat being sustained by the foremost post, for the wire continued to run through that as before. The object of this manœuvre was to relieve the strain upon the wire; for when the wire passed through both posts, the boat was held parallel to it, and consequently she presented her broadside to the current and to the wind. Now hanging to the wire by one point of attachment only, and that in one corner of the boat, she moved on in an oblique position, presenting an angle only to the force of the wind and stream. But, though the strain upon the wire was thus diminished, and the safety of the party promoted by the change, it seemed to make their situation precarious in the extreme.

Mr. Stock felt very uneasy again. He stood with his umbrella over his shoulder, leaning back, as it were, against the wind, and he could not help wishing that he were safe on shore. He then reflected on his professed belief in a superintending Providence, and saw how certainly that belief, if it were really honest and sincere, would make him quiet and at peace under all circumstances; and yet here the merely nominal peril of crossing a ferry in a windy

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Squire Stock makes good resolutions.The wire gives way.

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night was enough to make a practical Atheist of him. He felt confounded and humbled ; for Mr. Stock was not a hypocrite ; he was like the great mass of real Christians, sanctified but in a very small degree. He had experienced some feelings of penitence, and had maintained some little intercourse with God ; but, like a thousand others, his heart remained still, in a great measure, under the dominion of its native worldliness, selfishness, and sin.

He felt shocked to think of the interpretation which M'Donner had put upon his conduct and conversation during the day, and he resolved from that time forward never again to lay himself open to such a charge from an enemy of Christianity. How far this determination arose from a real penitence for his sin, rather than from a sense of mortification at the public rebuke which he had received, it might be difficult to say. Probably the two motives were mingled. In the course of his musing, the question arose to his mind whether he ought not to make an acknowledgment to M'Donner of his inconsistency and sin. While he was debating this question with himself, he heard a sound as of a sudden blow upon the wire. He looked up. It was running through the notch as before ; but the ferryman, who had been hitherto pulling regularly upon it, suddenly stopped, stamped with his foot, exclaiming,

“ There ! we're gone.”

At this instant the broken end of the wire came up out of the water, and ran through the notch. The ferryman grasped it with all his might, and attempted to hold on, but the momentum of the boat could not be resisted an instant. The wire drew from his hands and fell into the water. The boat was adrift.

The wind and the waves made so much noise, that the movement attending the parting of the wire was not heard away from its immediate vicinity ; and as the boat glided

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Alarm of the passengers.The mother and her children.

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along upon the current with very much the same motion as before, an ordinary passenger in another part of the boat would not have immediately noticed the change. M'Donner, however, while he stood engaged in conversation with Edmund's mother, had kept his ear upon the rubbing sound of the wire as it passed, knowing that the cessation of this sound would be the signal of any accident to the wire. He accordingly noticed its cessation. The next moment he observed that the noise of the waves dashing against the boat was diminished; for now it ceased, of course, its opposition to the current, and was fast yielding to the force of the winds and waves. Then, just as the mother before him began to notice the lulling of the wind, and to hope that they were getting under the lee of the opposite shore, he said, quietly,

"Well, ma'am, it's all over with us; we're adrift."

"Adrift!" said she, raising her head in consternation.

"Yes," said M'Donner; "the wire is gone."

"Then God help my poor little Georgie," said the mother; and she bent down over him, pressed him to her bosom, then raised his little head, heavy with sleep, and kissed his pale forehead.

"Edmund, my boy," she continued, "never mind the umbrella now; put it down and come under my cloak. We will keep close together. I suppose there is nothing that we can do, sir," she continued, speaking to M'Donner. But M'Donner had gone.

"Is there any thing we can do?" she repeated to the ferryman, whom she just then saw coming toward the place where she was sitting.

"No," replied the ferryman, "I don't know of any thing we can do. We must take our chance of running on to the shore below."

"Are there good places to land along the bank?"

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The ferryman bewildered.

M'Donner takes the command.

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"Not very good," said the ferryman, shaking his head. "We shall get into the rapids, I suppose, before we bring up, where the banks are steep and rocky, but I hope we shall get ashore safe yet."

It was very dark, and the winds and waves swept the ferry-boat down the river with great rapidity. It was so thick that they could scarcely see the water about them, and, so far as they could see, there was nothing to prevent their being brought up, without a moment's warning, upon a sharp point of rocks, or upon a hidden ledge in the middle of the rapids.

The ferryman was entirely bewildered by the circumstances in which he was placed. He had oars and setting-poles on board, and once, on a former occasion, when the wire had given way in daylight, he had easily succeeded in working the boat out of the current—where the water was deep, with the oars, before she drifted down to the rapids; and then, when once in shallow water, it was easy to *set* the boat in any direction. But now he was confounded and bewildered. He could not tell exactly whereabouts they were, and of course did not know which way to attempt to steer. M'Donner, seeing his indecision and helplessness, pretty soon assumed the command. The character of his mind, and the experience which he had acquired in his various adventures, had made him a man of great resources in an emergency, and had given him, especially, a habit of composure and self-command. He inquired of the ferryman how far he should judge they had got on their way across, and how far it was to the rapids. He also informed himself of the character of the shores on each side, and the nature of the curves in the course of the stream below, and, in fact, made a sort of mental chart of the waters which they were, so much against their will, about to navigate. While making these inquiries he was not idle. He

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The boat drifts down the stream.Wind and rain.

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got two long setting-poles to that end of the boat which was down the stream, and stationed the ferryman at one side and the wagoner at the other, to *sound*, every minute or two, by plunging the pole down into the water, in order to receive warning, by that means, when they should approach the land. He also coiled a rope, and made it ready to throw ashore as soon as they should touch the land, and he stationed Squire Stock, who expressed at once a desire to do any thing in his power under M'Donner's direction, with a lantern, instructing him to keep a sharp look-out on every side for signs of the shore.

They drifted on in this way for half an hour. During this time the boat turned completely round, and of course the men who were working the setting-poles, and M'Donner with his coil of rope, had to shift about too, as they were constantly to keep at that part of the boat which was turned down the stream. At one time, while M'Donner happened to be standing near to Edmund's mother, he overheard her say, after a deep sigh, "Dear little Georgie, I wish *you* were safe on shore." The anxiety of the mother triumphed, for a moment, over the calm resignation of the Christian.

The river was very direct in its course below the ferry, and the boat drifted on at the mercy of the current, the storm, and the rain for half an hour, during which time they passed some miles down the stream. The wind, however, had gradually driven them over toward the same side that they had left, and at length the ferryman, on striking his setting-pole into the water, cried out, "Here's bottom!"

An instant after, a heavy shock was felt through the boat from stem to stern; the horse staggered forward, drawing the wagon after him; all conversation was suspended, and an instant afterward M'Donner's coil of rope, or, rather, the few turns of it which he had held ready in his hand, flew

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The boat strikes a rock.Narrow escape of the passengers.

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through the air, and fell upon a rocky shore. Immediately M'Donner himself followed, springing for the rock. He fell a little short, but scrambled up, while the boat, turning upon the part which rested upon the rock as upon a pivot, swung rapidly round, with a heavy grinding motion. As she gradually came round, too, the force of the water, acting upon the end which was out in the stream with prodigious force, as upon the long arm of a lever, hove the other up obliquely upon the ledge, so as to threaten the complete subversion of the boat. The passengers instinctively crowded upon the highest part of the boat. A moment after, the planks at the end upon the rocks began to give way, and were twisted off; the boat then settled down to her proper bearings; she drifted loose from the ledge, and the water began to pour in at the opening made.

In the mean time, M'Donner was groping for a tree. He soon found one, and took a double turn round it with his line. Then, holding the end of the rope firmly in his hand, he could slacken it at his pleasure, so as to bring up the boat gradually, by checking her way, little by little, until he brought her to a state of rest. This, however, was now a work of no great difficulty; for, when the boat swung loose from the rock, she came round, almost of her own accord, into a sort of eddy below it, where the water was comparatively calm. When the passengers saw the water coming in in torrents at the damaged end of the boat, they immediately retreated to the other end, and as it was large and perfectly flat-bottomed, they succeeded in raising the damaged corner pretty well out of water. The boat now slowly drifted in under a low bank, overhung completely with trees and bushes, which projected so far over the water, and lay down in it so low, that it was impossible to get near to any firm ground.

"Halloo there!" shouted out M'Donner, in the darkness

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M'Donner recognizes the locality.He gets on board.

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THE BOAT SAFE.

and rain, as soon as he found that he could make fast his line. "Boat ahoy! all safe?"

"All safe, I believe, so far," answered the ferryman, "but I don't see how we are going to get ashore."

M'Donner reconnoitered the ground as well as he could by the flickering light of the lantern which they turned toward him, and soon began to think the rocky point upon which he had landed was one just above the little cove where he had changed his dress and his appearance that day. He had noticed the point before, and now, upon more careful examination, being convinced that it was the same, he called out to the ferryman to hold on by the bushes, for he was going to cast off his rope, and try to get on board. He accordingly unwound the rope from the tree, and told them to haul it in; and then, after much groping and scrambling among the bushes, and a second partial submersion in the water, he succeeded in regaining his position in the boat.



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The ferryman draws up M'Donner's bundle of clothes.

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"Now," said he, "out with the setting-poles and work down a little. I believe we shall find a landing just below here."

Two of the men accordingly put the poles into the water upon the outer side of the boat, and the others pulled and pushed as well as they could by the bushes. Thus they hauled themselves down a boat's length or so, when they came to the mouth of the cove, where they hove the boat in, Squire Stock standing forward, holding up the lantern, to throw what little light they had at command upon their way. M'Donner brought the boat up alongside of the very bank which he had occupied a few hours before, and then they handed the mother of Edmund and Georgie, with her double charge, safe to the shore.

The setting-pole which the ferryman was using to hold the boat up to the bank while the passengers got the horse and wagon out, was a sort of boat-hook; that is, besides the usual iron pike at the end, it had also a hook; and when he drew it up from the water, he was surprised to find that something heavy seemed to be attached to it. He pulled it up slowly, hand over hand, holding it with care in a perpendicular position, and at length brought his prize, whatever it might be, safely over the gunwale, and dropped it down upon the floor of the boat.

"What have I got here, I should like to know? Your lantern, squire, if you please."

Mr. Stock brought his lantern, and the men gathered around to see. The prize was M'Donner's bundle.

M'Donner, who was foremost in the ring, was thunder-struck. As usual in cases where men are surprised by some sudden development, it required some moments to consider how far it committed him, personally, and to look at the different bearings and probable consequences of the occurrence. The ferryman untied and opened the bundle in

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M'Donner is alarmed.The whole party gain the high road.

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silence, during which M'Donner had time to reflect a little. He did not see that there were any circumstances which should necessarily connect him with the discovery of the bundle, and he accordingly joined freely in the conversation to which it gave rise. The interest and the curiosity of the whole party were very strongly awakened by the occurrence; but, as M'Donner said, they had other things to think of then, and so the wet clothes were placed together again, as nearly as possible as they were found, and the bundle tied up, stone and all, as before.

M'Donner intended to have guided the party up by the path to the road; but, after the discovery of his bundle, he did not dare to appear too familiar with the localities. He hoped that some others of the party would have energy enough to look about for a path, and he asked the ferryman if he knew nothing of the way to the river road. But the ferryman was completely at a loss; and M'Donner, after a very short time, found his fears for his own safety giving way before his pity for the utterly forlorn condition of the mother and her children. Perhaps he thought of his own mother, and was urged to this effort by remorse excited by the recollections of his sins as a son. It is more probable that it was the simple impulse of benevolence—a desire to relieve suffering; for M'Donner, with all his depravity, had many traces left of some of the high and noble traits of character with which he had been originally endowed.

After a short time, therefore, spent in rambling about, he contrived, with as much appearance of accident as he could easily assume, to come upon the path, and the whole company made their way up to the road. Here they soon met quite a party of men in wagons and on horseback who were coming in pursuit of them. Some persons had watched the light of the lantern as the boat receded from the shore,

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M'Donner determines to withdraw from the neighborhood.

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and at length, seeing it leave the line of the regular track, and glide away down the current, they knew that the wire must have given way, and accordingly they got up a party to set off down the road in pursuit of them. All but the ferryman stopped at the tavern before named, where the stage-horses had been changed the day before, and in plain but comfortable beds they soon lost all recollection of their dangers and fatigues in quiet slumber.

Before they separated, however, for the night, M'Donner concluded that it would be safest for him to secure an early retreat from the neighborhood, especially as he found the people quite disposed to make a wonder out of the discovery of the bundle. He determined, therefore, not to return to the ferry, but to go off in another direction in the morning, but he did not wish to do this without giving any notice of his intention, as any thing like a mysterious disappearance would only increase suspicion against him. He was sitting alone before the large fire-place of the bar-room, where he had been drying his clothes, hesitating how to introduce the subject of his future motions, when Squire Stock advanced to him, and taking a seat by his side in a straight-backed chair, with a leather seat, which stood vacant there, he accosted him thus :

"Well, sir, I believe you have saved our lives to-night, and we owe you a great debt."

"No," said M'Donner, "you would have gone ashore just as well without me."

"I don't know that," replied the squire ; "but I was going to say a word on another point. You gave me a pretty sharp reproof this afternoon."

"Hope no offense," said M'Donner, rather doggedly.

"No," replied the squire, "none in the world. I deserved it. I have learned a lesson I shall not forget very soon, and I am much obliged to you for it."

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His farewell conversation with Mr. Stock.

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M'Donner looked upon his fellow-traveler in silence. He knew not what to say to such an acknowledgment from such a source.

"I suppose, sir," continued Mr. Stock, "from what you said, that you are an unbeliever?"

"They call me so sometimes," replied M'Donner.

"And I am afraid," continued Mr. Stock, after a moment's pause, leaning his folded arms upon his knees, and with his eyes fixed upon the fire, "that I have only confirmed you?"

"Why, yes," said M'Donner; "to tell you the truth, I think you have. I find precious little piety that will bear examining. It is all outside. Sometimes there is not even an outside."

Mr. Stock felt that this thrust was aimed at him, and, conscious that he had deserved it, he received it in silence. He saw it was in vain to attempt to reach his strange companion's heart by any further conversation, and he accordingly arose and turned round to him, saying,

"Well, sir, I'll bid you good-night. I shall see you again in the morning."

"Like enough," said M'Donner, "though I believe I shall go off down the river pretty early."

"Down the river?" said Mr. Stock.

"Yes; it will take 'em three or four hours to get another boat ready, and I am in a hurry to get on. I can get across somewhere below."

Mr. Stock resolved to rise early and see him before he went. He was very unwilling to have the interview terminate so. He felt a strong desire to say something more to him, though he did not know exactly what. He thought he should have time to consider the subject before the morning came, but when he arose the next morning, M'Donner was gone.

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M'Donner attempts to cross the river on a log.

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He had set off before day, and when the first rays of the rising sun appeared, he was slowly working his way along the bank of the river in search of a log left upon the shore. He did not have to search long, for many of the logs which are rolled into the rivers by the lumber-men, to be floated down, get lodged upon the banks. M'Donner selected one of the right size, and with some exertion succeeded in rolling it off and getting it afloat. He stepped upon the end nearest the shore, pressing the log down with his weight so as to ground it again in the sand. He then walked to the middle of the log, so as to relieve the pressure upon the end which was aground, and then, using his handspike for a setting-pole, he gently shoved himself off from the shore. The log floated nearly at the water's edge, and seemed to bear its burden very unsteadily. But M'Donner was entirely at his ease. He was perfectly accustomed to such a navigation, and was as sure of his footing as a statue on a rock might be. The log glided out into the stream, and the water soon became too deep for his setting-pole. Then,

heading his vessel directly across the current, he began to ply his handspike as a paddle, and soon appeared to make a slow progress from the shore, the current carrying him, at the same time, rapidly down the stream.

As he was careful to keep his log as nearly as possible at right angles to the current, he made a steady progress



M'DONNER ON THE LOG.

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The current carries him down, but he lands in safety.

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through it, and his own motion across was not opposed at all by the motion of the stream, though it transferred him continually to a lower and lower point as he advanced toward the opposite shore. The current was rapid, though not very dangerously so, and after an hour's steady paddling, M'Donner reached the opposite shore in safety, and brought up his log in quite a seamanlike manner alongside another, which lay with one end resting upon the sloping bank. He stepped from his primitive boat upon his equally primitive pier, and then pushing the former off into the stream again, and pitching his handspike in after it, he walked up among the trees on the shore.

## CHAPTER II

## OLD SCHOOL AND NEW SCHOOL.

THE summer glided away. The autumn followed, and the cold breezes of November ruffled and darkened the surface of Lake Charles. It was a large and irregular sheet of water, its shores varied by deep bays, and picturesque capes and headlands; and large islands, covered with forest trees, were scattered here and there over its surface.

Near one extremity of the lake there was a village of considerable size, slumbering among trees, upon a small plain which lay nearly level with the water. This plain was near the mouth of a large stream which emptied into the lake, and which, just before it descended to the level ground, had in former times tumbled over a rocky descent, for a short distance, in such a manner as to give the early engineers of the new settlements what they called a mill-privilege. The cataract formed here had long since been spoiled by a stone dam, and in its stead a wide sheet of water glided smoothly down a slope faced with plank; and as the whole fall was comprised in this one descent, the water both upon the upper and lower side was reduced nearly to a level, and extended in a smooth, dark, and quiet surface almost to the very brink of the fall above, and to the boiling foot of it from below. Various mills had been erected here, as the progress of society demanded the aid of machinery, and a quiet and pleasant little village had sprung up at a short distance upon the plain.

The mill-stream.

The two young lawyers.

The office.

In coming up from the lake in a boat, or upon skates in the winter, you glided over the dark surface of the brook for a quarter of a mile before you began to hear the roar of the waterfall. For a large part of this distance, the banks of the brook were encumbered with thickets and tall trees, some erect, in full growth and vigor; some dismantled and falling; others were prostrate, having crushed their neighbors in their fall; or, having been plunged into the water, they narrowed the channel with their mouldering tops, or impeded the navigation with snags and sawyers. As you approached the fall, farms and fields began to appear on one side of the stream, and the houses of the village among the trees on the opposite bank, with a tall spire upon one edifice and a cupola upon the other, which gave an air of some little consequence to the embryo town.

"Society," as it is called, was enlivened in this village, at the time of our narrative, by the presence of two law students, both being young gentlemen of considerable attractions, each in his own way. The one was the son of the prominent personage of the village, the owner of the mills—one of the early settlers, and, in fact, the founder of the little state. He lived in a large square house just out of the village, in the direction of the mills, and his office, for he was a lawyer, was in one of the wings of his mansion, looking toward the town. It was close upon the street, so as to be easily accessible, and yet the owner secured for himself the possibility of quiet by having an inner room attached to his office, well carpeted, and provided with a study chair, a sofa, and a well-selected library. A square table stood in the centre, covered with a green cloth. Upon this table there lay a large volume of maps, a bronze inkstand, a portfolio, and other similar articles; and near one side was a large, double-folding portable writing-desk, with brass mountings. In a word, the little room was fill-



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Some account of James and his cousin.Contrasts of character.

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ed up with all those fixtures and appointments which constitute the beau ideal of a student in respect to what he calls his "sanctum." This back room was just now considered as more peculiarly the province of James, the lawyer's son, who had some time since finished his college studies, and was here quietly established, reading law.

The other student was James's cousin, an orphan. He inherited, however, some property, and had received an expensive and thorough education. Both had been brought up in boyhood in this village, and had often paddled their canoe together up the mill-pond, or skated and built fires upon the lake in winter. From these early days there had always been a strong contrast between them, both in person and character. James was of fair complexion, with blue eyes and sandy hair, and full of life and gayety. His cousin's dark locks shaded a pale forehead, and a deep intellectual expression beamed from his eye. James was all life and action, his cousin was thought and feeling. James loved play, company, enterprise, his cousin loved solitude, reading, and lonely rambles. James would excel his cousin in a story or in an amusing description, but his cousin would defeat him in an argument. They had their childish misunderstandings at first, but their intimacy soon ripened into a solid friendship; they loved each other the better on account of the contrasts in their characters; each soon settled into his niche, and performed his own peculiar part in all their joint schemes. The one was the thinker, the other the actor; the one planned, the other executed. James was *known* most extensively, and had a greater number of warm friends, and yet, perhaps, his cousin was loved a little more warmly by those who really knew him.

They entered college together as classmates, and lived and studied together during their whole college course. As the time for the assignment of college honors approached,

Their career in college.	Their practical piety.	New School and Old School.
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they respectfully petitioned the college government not to give to either of them a rank above the other. The reasons which they assigned were, that they were cousins ; that they always had been intimate friends ; that their homes were in the same town, and all their friends and relations common ; and that they should probably continue to be connected, in a greater or less degree, in future life ; and they wished, therefore, to avoid, if the government could possibly make it consistent with their duties, the putting of a mark of inferiority upon either. Their petition was granted ; in fact, the government would have found it very difficult to have decided the question between them ; and so they appeared upon the stage *together* on Commencement day.

They both received at home a religious education, but it was religion of the heart and conduct, mainly, which had been inculcated upon them. Their theological opinions remained in a great measure unformed. They were deeply interested in the practical duties of religion from early childhood, but it was not until near the close of their college course that their minds were strongly interested in the theory ; then, for months, the great topics of revelation were more or less constantly before their minds. They read, they talked, they listened ; and, being exposed to all the various influences, so mixed and heterogeneous, which compose the theological atmosphere of college, each being free to follow the genius and bent of his own mind, they came to somewhat different results in respect to that whole theological region in which are involved questions relative to the control of God over the moral actions of man. James became, of course, a New School man, and his cousin an Old School man.

We say New School and Old School, for this seems to be, just now, the most convenient way of designating a dis-

tion which has run through the Church in almost all ages, forming two different castes or types of piety, as it were, in almost every age.

We say that each fell, *of course*, into the views that he adopted ; for, after all, though it may not be so laid down in books of theology, constitutional temperament has a great deal to do in the formation of religious opinions, or rather, perhaps, in determining the cast and type of religious character. The great subject of moral agency, that is, of the conditions of moral responsibility between a creature and its Creator, presents itself in two great aspects or phases, distinct and well-defined in their nature, and yet, like the colors of a changeable silk, so blended with each other as sometimes utterly to confound the vision, though generally each observer has his color, which, from his peculiar position or character, is the one that he habitually regards, some looking only at the red and others only at the blue. This distinction has run through the Church, and been a most fruitful source of controversy in every age.

In the one case, the absolute sovereignty of God, his entire and unbounded control over all actions and all events, is made the corner stone of faith, and only such a degree of independence of action on the part of man is allowed as may be consistent with this. In the other case, the absolute independence of man in respect to original moral action is the point which seems most sure, and the sovereignty of God must be so viewed as not to interfere with it. Starting from this single point of divergence, the differences of view run into all the great topics connected with the agency of man and the influence of God over him ; or, rather, every doctrine of religion, or point in practice which is connected with these subjects, is necessarily modified by the simple difference in the metaphysical philosophy of the subject described above. The one class, in carrying out their

views of the absolute and unlimited supremacy of Jehovah, give to him the control over every thing that comes to pass. The events which take place in this world, whether seemingly good or seemingly evil, are matters, not of mere permission, *toleration* on his part, but of *ordination*. They are parts of his plan, his deliberate settled design; while yet, incomprehensible as it may be, the whole moral responsibility of the action thus preordained rests solely upon the subordinate actors. They conceive that the character of the being formed is determined by the power that forms it, and that the conduct results from this innate character, and from the circumstances in which the being is placed, according to fixed moral laws, arranged by the mighty Sovereign; and that no radical change can take place but by a *re-creation*, in which the soul renewed is the subject, not of an act which it performs itself, but of an act performed *upon it*; and that all such changes which do take place are parts of the great, unchangeable plan of the Supreme.

The view is simple, sublime, even terrible. All difficulties in it are reduced to one—enormous, and, in fact, insurmountable to human powers as that one is—to the question how, when the whole control, so absolute and unconditional, runs back to God, the moral responsibility can be made to stop and rest with man. But even this difficulty, in its oneness, its simplicity, and its obvious and unquestioned insolubility, is a source of interest. The mind actually derives some such satisfaction as an algebraist experiences when an irrational term has been separated from all the other terms of the question, and, though it can not be reduced, is yet disentangled from the rest, and stands by itself in a single expression. And there even the absolute impossibility of doing any thing more with it becomes the source of a certain satisfaction. He has gone to the end of human powers, and he is satisfied to go no farther.

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The New School class of minds.

The character of their philosophy.

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Then, besides the simplicity of the form to which all the difficulties are reduced, there is something in the dread sublimity of the position in which these views place the Supreme, which possesses a charm for minds of a certain temperament and cast of character. They look with awe and veneration at the majesty of such a sovereign, and rest with a feeling of repose and security under the unqualified and unlimited absoluteness of his power.

The other class of minds make the moral freedom and responsibility of man the main intrenchment, and take care to hold all other truths so that they shall not be inconsistent with this. Whatever else is false, this they *know* is true. They feel it. They are sure of it. It stands, they think, sustained by the direct testimony of consciousness, and their ideas of the absoluteness of God's control over human feelings and actions must not encroach upon it. The views they entertain on all subjects appertaining to human character and action are of course affected by this, their fundamental position. The independent agency of man is magnified, and the influence of God over the soul is viewed in such a light as not to interfere with it. In regeneration, the man himself is the actor; predestination becomes foreknowledge, and the sin which exists is *permitted*, not fore-ordained.

As we have said above, this distinction, or, rather, these two distinctive modes of viewing the whole class of questions which involve the subject of the moral agency of created beings, has run down through the Church in all ages, and has always led to the same interminable discussions. The contest is the same, and the arguments the same, reproduced in altered forms, according to the changing habits and philosophy of the times. There is an insurmountable difficulty in conceiving of an *absolute sovereign* on the

throne, and yet *absolutely independent* action in the subject ; and, accordingly, if we will frame a theory which shall be complete and self-consistent *to our minds*, one or the other must, in some degree, give way. Or, if we do not insist on carrying out our theory, we must, in our habitual cast of character, give one or the other of these truths the prominence, and form our Christian character upon it, while the other is left somewhat more in the shade.

And this depends greatly on the cast and temperament of the mind. The thoughtful, the sedate, the retiring, exalt the sovereignty of God ; the active and the energetic sympathize more readily with high views of the freedom and independence of man. Each *holds*, perhaps, substantially, all the truths that are held by the other ; but he *loves*, and forms his Christian character upon, his own. The Old School man dwells upon the boundless power of God, and his own moral helplessness ; the New School man presses human responsibility, and carefully separates God from all direct connection with human sins. The one strives to bring men to humble submission, the other to vigorous action ; the former urges the bondage of the will in order to humble the soul to a sense of the hopelessness of its ruin, the other presses its freedom to arouse it to its duty ; the one invokes the Holy Spirit to create the heart anew, the other to aid in directing its existing powers to a new and better end ; the one is earnest for faith as the foundation of works, the other strives for works as the evidence of faith ; the one humbly puts forth his hand, and asks God to lead him, and make him the humble instrument of accomplishing his will ; the other strives to press forward himself ardently in duty, in order that he may cordially and actively co-operate with God.

We may almost predict, in any case, from knowing the constitutional temperament of the man, which of these two

Examples.

James in his office.

The January thaw.

great types his Christian character will assume. The temperament that leans to the latter is the sanguine, the joyous, the ardent; to the other, the melancholy, the thoughtful, the profound. Erasmus, witty, lively, educated in the midst of society, and with a mind formed for ready and rapid action, makes the will free. Luther, in his solitary studies in his convent, finds it in bondage, and places in the hands of God the reins of unbounded power. St. Augustin, Brainerd, the Waldenses, and the stern thinkers among the Swiss and Scotch reformers, loved and urged the absolute supremacy of God; while many others, equally sincere and devoted followers of the Savior, in all times, have had their Christian characters formed more directly upon high views of the moral freedom and responsibility of man. Thus the temperament most natural to the one class is the melancholic—it is the temperament of genius—of deep thought; that of the other is the sanguine—the temperament of brilliant achievement. The piety formed by the latter is the piety of action, that of the other is the piety of repose.

But we must go on with our story. James was sitting in the back office at his table, reading. It was January. The weather, however, was very mild; a warm southern rain was descending copiously upon the stores of snow which had fallen in the early part of the winter. In fact, it was in the midst of the "January thaw." A few dying brands were lying in the fire-place, and James, after reading for some time in silence, laid down his book, rose, and walked to the window with the air of one tired of sitting still. He was well formed and graceful in his movements, his countenance was good-humored and intelligent, his hair auburn, and his eye was mild and gentle, and yet spirited in its expression. He walked to the window, and looked out upon a little garden behind his father's house. The

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Herman comes in and proposes a walk.

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rain dripped from the trees, and stood in great pools in the alleys. Those parts of the roofs around which had been freed from the snow were smoking under the warmth of the atmosphere, and miniature torrents poured down the spouts, and along the water-courses in the yard. James's little sister Ellen stood in a doorway, reaching out a dipper which she held in her hand to catch the water as it dropped from the roof, pleased with the drumming sound which it made as it struck upon the bottom of the vessel. After looking upon the scene a moment, he turned his eye up to a vane which surmounted a martin-house upon a pole in a corner of the yard.

"About south," said he to himself—"hauling round. Two points more, and it will bring Herman out."

At this moment he heard a tap at the door, and upon answering "Come in," the door opened, and his cousin entered. He was somewhat taller than James, and more pale and intellectual in the cast of his countenance. His eye was dark and mild, but full of intelligence, and the expression of his countenance when in a state of repose was that of serious happiness. You would see at once that those features might very easily take the expression of sadness, but they had not that expression now.

"Ah! Cousin Herman," said James, "I am glad to see you. I was just wishing for you. What a pretty piece of business in the way of weather this is!"

"It is very good weather," said Herman, coolly, as he walked into the room.

"Nothing seems ever to come amiss to such a fatalist as you are," replied James; "you are always all resignation."

"No," said Herman, "I did not mean to make a parade of resignation; I mean, honestly, that this is a very pleasant day."

"Pleasant for what?"



Objections answered.	The North Brook.	James yields.
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"For a walk," said Herman.

"A walk!" said James, bending his laughing eyes upon him with an expression of mingled amusement and surprise. "Why, it rains in torrents."

"Yes, but I have an umbrella."

"And the snow and water is ankle deep every where."

"And we both have boots."

"But walking in this snow and water an hour," said James, "will carry the water through any boots in the world—in to the skin."

"It can't go any farther, at any rate," said Herman.

James laughed, and wished to know if Herman was really in earnest about his walk. Herman said he was; that he was tired of being shut up; that the air was mild and delightful, the wind was hauling round toward the westward, and that it would probably soon clear up; and, in the mean time, he wanted to see the torrents while they were swelled with the rains.

"Which way shall we go?" said James.

"Up the North Brook," said Herman.

"The North Brook" was a wild stream which came tumbling down through the forests toward the mill-pond, traversing as wild and lonely a region as could be conceived. James wanted to go in some other direction, where they could find easier walking, but Herman persisted in pursuing his own plan. He wanted to see the gorge of the North Brook in a thaw, and they should not have so good an opportunity again during the winter. In a word, he was determined to go, and James, all the time protesting against the folly of it, at length concluded to accompany him. Herman generally let James take his own way; but he was like all other yielding and submissive persons—when they do take a stand, it is the stand of a statue; and James knew very well that Herman would be immovable.

Each class confident.

Different kinds of confidence.

In fifteen minutes they were accordingly equipped in what they called their hurricane boots, and in large, coarse cloaks which were reserved for such occasions; and then, with a broad umbrella over their heads, they sallied forth into the drenching rain.

The New School man and the Old School man are equally confident, perhaps, of the soundness of their respective views, but there is some difference in the nature of that confidence: that of the New School man is active ardor, that of the Old School man is rather passive fixedness and immobility; the former is always ready to urge his views upon *others*, the latter defends *himself* with indomitable obstinacy when you attack him; the former, considered as an opponent, is the wolf, who goes out to act the aggressor, and a very troublesome aggressor he is; the latter is the lion, who remains in his den, but he will give you a terrible reception if you attack him there. The discussions which often took place between James and his cousin were accordingly, in most cases, commenced by James, and he always had the advantage in the attack; but they generally ended in his being cornered and confounded by his cousin, and in his drawing off his forces, as it were, to gather strength for a new onset upon some more vulnerable point, which he hoped in the mean time to find. A conversation which may be taken for a pretty fair specimen of these discussions occurred as follows under their great umbrella.

They had walked on ten or fifteen minutes, engaged in conversation on ordinary topics, when at length, after a pause of several minutes, James commenced, with the air and tone of introducing a new subject of discourse,

"Herman!"

"Well," said Herman.

"There is one advantage in this walk."

"And what is that?"

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James and Herman enter upon a metaphysical discussion.

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"Why, you have upset your own theology by it. You have furnished me with a splendid illustration of the freedom of the will. How perfectly plain it is, that when I was hesitating there, it rested entirely with me, and with me alone, to decide whether I should come with you or not. I am directly conscious of having had the power within myself, and entirely independent of all foreign control. I feel it—I *know* it."

"Yes," said Herman, coolly, "when a man is very positive, he is very likely to be mistaken."

"But isn't it so? Come, now, be honest once, and acknowledge that you are ashore."

Herman paused, and the companions took two or three steps in silence. At length he said,

"You think, then, that the decision of your mind at that moment was not influenced by any thing?"

"It was not *controlled* by any thing," said James.

"The question is just this," said Herman. "You admit that you are conscious of certain native desires and tendencies of mind, such as a desire to take a walk and see a torrent, a pleasure in gratifying me, a reluctance to go out and expose yourself to the rain, &c. Now, when I proposed to you to take this walk, the question is whether these conflicting propensities settled the question among themselves, or whether your will decided the question, having these propensities in view, but not controlled by them."

"Yes," said James.

"Now if the balance among the propensities settled the question and determined your decision, then that decision fell in with and was a part of the great chain of moral causes and effects."

"Yes," said James.

"And if they did not," continued Herman—"if your *will*, as an independent power, after holding itself in a moment-

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That which is not an *effect* must be absolutely contingent.

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ary suspense, decided absolutely, by its own spontaneous action, then your decision is not a part of any *chain* of causes and effects, but was the commencement of a new series, absolutely *originating* there."

"How?" said James, doubtfully, as if he did not know whether it would be safe for him to assent or not.

"Why, if your decision at that time resulted from some independent action of the *will*—so independent of all the circumstances, that while the circumstances remained unchanged, it might act either one way or the other—then it seems to me that the decision is not an *effect*—that is, it is not controlled by causes. It is a new phenomenon, as it were, starting up out of absolute contingency. It becomes a cause, for it produces effects; but it is not an effect, for it had no cause."

James did not reply. The reasoning seemed conclusive so far, but he did not like to embarrass himself by any useless admissions.

"You see," continued Herman, "that your decision could not have a *cause*, for the very meaning of *caused* is *determined* by what precedes it. The propensities of the mind and the circumstances of the case—that is, the rain-storm and my invitation, were not the *cause* of your decision, but only the occasion."

"Well," said James, "suppose I admit that, what then?"

"Then it follows that all human acts are absolute commencements of new trains of causes and effects, each one being entirely *uncaused* itself; and if it is absolutely uncaused, it must be absolutely *contingent*, and, of course, there can not be any ground even for knowing beforehand what it will be. The whole moral universe is thus cast entirely loose from God, and has as many masters as there are men."

"That does not seem to me to follow. I don't see any

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James and Herman get into very deep water.

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absurdity in supposing that God may *foresee* an act without exerting any control over it."

"Why, there is this absurdity. Take the case of any act—Cæsar's passing the Rubicon, for example. It is plain that if it is foreseen it must certainly take place; it can not be foreseen, then, until there is certainty that it will take place. Foreseeing is, in fact, *perceiving the ground of the certainty*. Now, according to your theory that the act is absolutely *originated* by the will at the time, and is not controlled by pre-existing causes, all ground for certainty is utterly taken away. There is no certainty, and there can be none, until the moment arrives; and if any mind should foresee or imagine that it could foresee, it must be an illusion. It perceives a ground of certainty, when, in fact, there is no certainty at all."

"I admit that we can not understand how God can foresee what a decision will be when it is not determined until the time comes for it to be made. There is a difficulty, I grant, but we can not limit God's powers by our own."

"No," replied Herman, "I know that; it is not the mere *difficulty* of it that I object to, but the absolute absurdity of it. The foreknowledge, on the one hand, implies certainty; and, on the other hand, the absolute *origination* of the act, on the spot, by a power utterly independent of all control from previous causes, necessarily implies *uncertainty*; and these are inconsistent in the very nature of things. I do not limit the power of God—that is, I do not deny him the power of doing any thing which we can conceive of as possible in itself, but an event can not be certain and uncertain at the same time. To be foreknown, it must be certain before it happens; to arise on the spot independently of all control by previous causes, it must be uncertain before it happens."

Here James pointed to a sleigh which was moving along

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An incident occurs for furnishing James with an illustration.

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before them, approaching a point where the road divided. The sleigh turned to the left.

"There," said he; "we look through space, and see which way that man turns his horse without interfering in the least with his decision. Now what absurdity is there in supposing that God may look through time in a manner somewhat analogous to that, and so see the end from the beginning without controlling the end at all?"

Herman could not answer this question very well, so he was silent, contrary to the usual custom of metaphysical disputants.

In the mean time the rain had gradually ceased. A broad band of light spread itself over the western sky, rising slowly, and expanding as it rose. The drops glittered upon the trees, and the noise of rushing water all around seemed to swell and increase as the sound of the wind and falling rain subsided. The young men turned from the main road into a by-path, which led them off into the woods, and soon brought them to the shores of the brook. The brook was a torrent indeed. It poured over the rocky declivities and broad shallows in its bed with great violence, sometimes under the ice and sometimes over it. Great cakes of flat ice floated in the deeper parts, and stalactites and stalagmites in uncouth forms crumbled down the little cascades. At particular points, where there were rocky obstructions on each side of the stream, the ice and snow had wedged themselves in, and formed a sort of rude natural dam, with great whirlpools sucking in fresh fragments from above, and a perfect caldron boiling and foaming below. James and his cousin had not lost or forgotten the feelings of boyhood. They pulled long poles out of a brush fence, and amused themselves with clearing away these obstructions, and watching the great masses of ice, as they broke away from their lodgment, and were borne

Difficulties on either side.

St. Paul's difficulty.

down by the torrent of liberated waters, crowding and jamming one another along the stream.

After a while they paused, and stood, each upon a rock, with his pole resting upon the brink of the water.

"Herman," said James, "you must admit that my views are more satisfactory than yours—I mean in the results. They make every man entirely responsible for his own conduct. He is his own master, as it were, and has his moral destiny in his own hands; and God is freed from all responsibility of every kind for the sins which his creatures commit."

"Yes," said Herman, "I acknowledge that, but then those views do in effect dethrone God. He is no longer the monarch—the sovereign; for a vast portion of the events which take place under his reign, and altogether the most interesting and important portion—that is, the moral actions of his creatures, are placed beyond his control. He must have all character and conduct under his *control*, or else he must, when he calls men into existence, take the risk of their conduct, while he is himself a mere looker-on."

"And yet, if he controls—if all human conduct results *necessarily* from causes which he has put in operation, how can we avoid making him morally responsible for it all?"

"I don't know," said Herman; "there's the great difficulty. 'The Son of man *goeth*, as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed.' That is, a woe is denounced against the man, whoever he might be, who should become the instrument to fulfill one of God's deliberate and recorded designs."

"That is a hard knot," said James, after a pause.

"Yes, but it does not trouble *me* at all," replied Herman.

"How so?"

"Because it seems St. Paul came across the very same, and he did not try to answer it, so I am content not to. He

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Herman thinks that the will possesses very little real power.

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says, 'Thou wilt say, then, why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?'—that is, how can we be worthy of blame if all our actions are only the gradual development of God's designs? And he does not attempt to explain it. Now, as I come upon the same difficulty precisely, and as it seems to me utterly unanswerable, as it appears to have seemed to him, I infer that I have come in the same course, and occupy the same position with him, so that the difficulty is an actual confirmation of my views. I make the same rock which an experienced old navigator made before me, and it has the same aspects and bearings; and so, as every body admits that he was on the right course, I take it for granted that I am too."

So saying, Herman pitched his pole into the water, and turned toward the woods, James following his example and his steps.

They walked along a little time in light conversation, examining the various objects of interest they met—now the remains of a fantastic snow-drift, now an old hollow tree, and now a squirrel running along upon a log, or gliding through the low shrubbery with his plume-like tail curled over his back. At length Herman returned again to the general subject of their discussion by saying,

"It seems to me, cousin James, that you take altogether a wrong view of the power and province of the *will* in your system of metaphysical philosophy. The will is the boatswain, not the commander. Her business is to convey orders and carry them into execution, not to issue them originally."

"Who does issue them?"

"The propensities, and the permanent moral tendencies of the soul, which constitute the character as distinguished from the conduct. I think it can be shown very clearly that the will is altogether more of a servant than a master."



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Herman shows that the will can not control the train of thought,

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"No," said James, "the will is free, and it forms the conduct by its own spontaneous preferences, and this conduct, viewed collectively, constitutes what we call the character."

"Yes, that is your philosophy, I know. But now let us look at the power the will has over the other powers and faculties of the mind. First, on the thoughts. Look at that red squirrel running along with an acorn in his cheek; now see if you can look at him without thinking of him—that is, fix your eye upon him, and yet, by your *will*, prevent all thoughts of him from entering your mind."

"No," said James, "that is impossible; but that proves nothing. Nobody pretends that the will governs the trains of thought so entirely as to exclude the idea of a thing when the visible object is full before us."

"Very well," said Herman; "walk along, then, a little before me, and I will follow. Now I am out of sight," he continued, as James stepped on before him in the path. "Suppose you try now to walk on for five minutes, and not allow any idea of me to enter your mind."

"Nonsense!" said James, turning round and facing his cousin with a ludicrous expression of countenance, which Herman regarded with a look of mock gravity, but with a secret roguishness in his eye. "I do not suppose that the trains of *thought* are controlled absolutely by the will in any case. They follow the regular laws of association, I know."

"It is something to get you to admit that the will is not omnipotent," said Herman. "We will pass on, then, and next try its power on the memory. Suppose you were to resolve to forget all this conversation henceforth and forever, could you do it?"

"Certainly not," said James.

"Or endeavor to recall to mind what you have forgotten?"

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nor the intellectual tastes and preferences of the mind.

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"No," said James. "The will has not much direct power over the memory, I grant."

"Take the habits of attention: when we sit down to read a book, we can not prevent our minds from wandering by any effort we can make. If the book interests us itself, we give it our attention very easily, but it is not the will which enables us to do it."

"It helps," said James.

"Not much," said Herman; "at least, it does not help me. The more I strive to keep my thoughts upon what I am reading sometimes, the worse it is. I seem to be only staring at blank paper. I read the paragraph over and over again, but get no idea."

James was conscious of something similar in his own case, and yet he seemed equally conscious of some degree of power over his attention by means of an exertion of the will. He did not readily see where the line was to be drawn, and so he simply said,

"Well, go on."

"Take, then, the habitual tastes and preferences of the mind. You and I like rambling in the woods; but we could not, by *willing* it, change this taste for another, say the dislike of solitude, which some persons have."

"We could train ourselves to new tastes."

"Yes, but training is not *willing*. The fact that we should have to go through an indirect course to reach the point shows that it is beyond the direct control of the will. If the will governed these intellectual tastes and pleasures, we could change them instantaneously, as we can the postures and attitudes of the body. *They* are really under the control of the will."

"Yes; but, cousin Herman, you are entirely off from the point," said James. "All these things relate to the *intellectual* constitution of the soul, which we all know is under

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Herman comes to the moral feelings.Compassion for the suffering.

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fixed laws. I have been waiting this half hour for you to come to some *moral* characteristics. It is only in respect to acts and qualities of a moral nature that there is any question, and I see you are very shy of coming to these. You'll make a lawyer, I see, cousin; you know how to keep clear of weak points.

"Be patient—be patient," said Herman; "we will come to them in time. But first I want to say one thing about these intellectual characteristics. You admit, then, that the will is not the mistress of these?"

"Yes," said James.

"But, on the other hand, she is their servant. She not only can not command them, but she has very often to obey them. A sudden thought brought up by the laws of association sets the will in action. So the memory, the habits of mind, the tastes, and all these intellectual characteristics, as you call them, often move the will, and, in obedience to them, she goes forth to action, but they will not submit to *her* at all."

James assented to this in silence, and Herman went on.

"Well, now we will try the power of the will in respect to moral emotions. Take a simple case of pity for the suffering. Suppose that you and I should see a man lying in the road, wounded and bleeding, with his sleigh upset by his side. Could we, by any effort of the will which we could make, prevent feeling compassion for him and a desire to help him?"

"That would hardly be of a moral nature," replied James; "it would be a mere animal feeling."

"A *mere* animal feeling?" said Herman.

"Pretty much."

"A dog would not have such a feeling."

"Yes, indeed he would," replied James, "a great deal more strongly than most men, I'll engage. You don't know

Herman states a case.

The disputants are puzzled.

so much about dogs as I do," he added, jogging him playfully with his elbow as they walked along arm in arm, "however it may be in respect to metaphysics."

Herman laughed and said, "We will take another feeling, then, which is certainly something more than merely animal. Suppose we should meet two men quarreling in the streets as we are going home—we should both be pained at seeing them. A great many persons would be pleased, and would run up to make a ring. Now, could we change our feeling of pain into pleasure by an effort of the will?"

James did not answer.

"That is a feeling of a moral nature, certainly."

James walked on thoughtfully and in silence.

"And the men who would run up to make a ring would be equally unable to change their feeling of pleasure into pain."

"No, not at all," said James. "It would be a very criminal feeling, and they would be entirely to blame for it, and they could not be to blame unless the feeling was entirely under their control."

"It would be a very criminal feeling," said Herman, "and they would be entirely to blame, but yet it would not be under the control of their wills."

"Then a man may be to blame for what he can not help," said James.

"A man may be to blame for feelings which are not under the control of his will," replied Herman. In fact, the young gentlemen were both getting into very deep water.

"Herman," continued James, after a moment's pause, "that's absurd. It is contrary to the common sense of all mankind."

"James, it is true; for it is plain that these men would be guilty, and yet it is plain that, *with their characters*, they could not help taking pleasure in seeing the battle."

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The disputants agree to refer the question to the first man they meet.

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"I don't think that last is so plain. They could change their feelings if they pleased."

"What makes you think so?"

"Why, it is self-evident. I'll leave it to any body."

"Let us leave it to the first man we meet."

"Agreed," said James.

"You shall put the question?" said Herman, with a half-inquiring tone.

"Very well, I will."

"The point is," added Herman, "whether a crowd of common street men and boys, in a ring around a fight, can help, by any effort of their will, taking a pleasure in it. Now you must state it fairly. No leading questions."

This being arranged, they walked along and soon came out of the woods, both highly interested in the reference they had agreed upon, and wondering who the first person they might meet would be.

As they came out into the road, they saw a man before



THE ENCOUNTER.

M'Donner.

James states the question.

them, apparently a traveler. He had a small bundle in one hand, and a good stout walking-stick in the other. He was well built and athletic in his form, and he walked with the air of a man of decision. In fact, it was M'Donner.

"He's the man for us," said Herman. "He's an Old School man, I know. There is an air of calm, quiet philosophy about his head and shoulders."

"He's a New School man," said James; "you can tell it by his energetic gait. I consider it the same as decided in my favor."

The disputants walked rapidly on, and soon came up with the traveler.

"Good-day, sir," said James, in a good-humored tone.

"Servant, gentlemen," said M'Donner; "wet walking to-day."

"Very wet," said James. "This gentleman and I got into a discussion back here in the woods, and not thinking alike upon a certain point, we agreed to leave it to the first man we met, and you seem to be the person."

"Ah!" said M'Donner, "a sort of wager, I suppose."

"No," said James, "we are not betting men; it was merely a friendly discussion. If you have no objection, we should like to state the point to you."

"None in the world, gentlemen," said M'Donner, entering very cordially into the spirit of the business. "I have seen a little more service, maybe, than either of you have, and if it is a practical question, or about a matter of fact, if I can settle it to your satisfaction, I will."

"Well," said James, "the point is just this: Suppose two men get to fighting in the streets, and the men and boys get round them to form a ring."

"Yes," said M'Donner.

"You know there is a sort of pleasure that men and boys take in seeing such a fight."

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James and Herman together explain the question.

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"No better sport," said M'Donner, "for those that like it."

"And yet it gives some persons pain."

"I know," said M'Donner. "It *does*—some people."

"It ought to give every one pain," continued James.

"Now the question is just this: whether the people that form a ring to look on and make sport of it might not, if they chose, at once feel as they ought to about it, and be *pained* to see their fellow-men cruelly beating one another. That's the question, isn't it, Herman?"

"Yes," said Herman, "whether these men can change their feelings at once by a determination, so as to receive pain instead of pleasure from the sight."

M'Donner walked on for some steps in silence. He seemed to be revolving the question in his mind.

"Suppose some inducement was offered to them to change their feelings at once in regard to it, *could* they do it?" added Herman.

"As, for instance," said M'Donner, "suppose you should offer them a good drink all round."

"Yes," said Herman.

"No," said James, spurning the idea with indignation, "not from such a motive as that."

"No matter what the motive is," said Herman, addressing himself to James, "if it is only powerful enough to act upon the will. If they are led to *desire* to change their feelings either by money or drink, or any thing else they like, they could do it if it depended upon the will; for these motives could move the will, and then, if the will could change the feelings, the work would be done."

"But a real desire for such a change could not be effected by such a motive," said James, in reply to Herman.

"Gentlemen," said M'Donner, "I don't understand your arguments very well, but the question is a pretty plain one to my mind without any arguments. I think the tempta-

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M'Donner answers the question without understanding it.

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tion of the offer of a good drink would be pretty strong, but still I think that most fellows would, on the whole, rather prefer to see the fight out."

James laughed outright at this answer, and Herman said quietly,

"No, sir, you don't exactly understand the point. You have only showed us that the men would prefer the pleasure of seeing the fight to that of a treat; but that is not the question. The question is, whether they could, by their own determination and will, change their feelings about it, so as to be really pained and troubled, instead of pleased, at the sight of violence and cruelty."

"Why, to tell the truth," said M'Donner, in a deliberate and hesitating manner, "I never thought of that question before."

"Well, think of it now," said James; "you are the appointed referee, and you must decide it."

"It is clear," said M'Donner, "that they could all go away if they pleased, and not look on and encourage the men."

"Certainly," said Herman; "but that is not the question."

"And they could take hold and separate them, and not let them quarrel."

"Of course," said Herman, "they could do that."

"And as to changing their feelings about it, I think, on the whole, they could do that, if you'd let them take a little time for it."

"Oh, yes," said Herman, "that may be; they may keep better company, and form different moral habits, and by-and-by come to be different sort of men."

"Very well," said James; "that is what I mean."

"Not at all," said Herman; "that is not changing themselves by an act of the will. If the will controls their feelings and characters directly, they could alter them immediately upon the spot."



M'Donner's final opinion.

The weather changes.

Intense cold.

"Well," said M'Donner, "I am afraid I can't settle your question, after all. It is a knotty point. I don't like to say a man can't change his character, and yet I know men who would find it a hard undertaking, as it seems to me, to change themselves very suddenly into real honest men."

They here approached the village, and their conversation was interrupted. There was something in M'Donner's appearance and manner that awakened Herman's interest and curiosity, and he made some inquiries respecting his condition and objects, and finding that he was a laboring man coming to the village in pursuit of employment, he told him that if he would come to his office the next morning after breakfast, he would try to find something for him to do.

That night a strong gale sprung up in the northwest, sweeping down from the mountains, and completely re-establishing the dominion of winter and cold. The mercury fell from temperate to freezing, and from freezing to zero. The next day it rallied a little about noon, but at night sank again lower and lower, and on the following morning, though the air was calm and the sky clear, every thing seemed subdued under the power of the piercing, stinging cold. The smokes from the chimneys in the village ascended in columns, bright, erect, and beautiful; the roads were glassy, and the windows covered with a copious frost-work of stars, and spangles, and plumes. The streets were deserted, except that now and then a boy trotted along with his hands at his ears, his elbows projecting before him. Even the blacksmith's shop-door was shut, and the solitary saddle-horse which stood a moment at the post-office door exhibited a coat bristled and shaggy with the cold. The stream, which was generally open from the falls to the lake, closed over; vast columns and entablatures of

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M'Donner at his work.

He calls in at the office to see Herman.

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ice formed along the sluices of the mills, and hung down from all the fixtures about the water-wheel; and the field of ice from above advanced to the very brink of the fall.

During these two cold days M'Donner worked industriously at a wood-pile under a small shed opening to the south, and attached to the office where Herman pursued his studies. Herman became, for some reason or other, a good deal interested in the man, though he scarcely knew why. There was something forcible and striking in his conversation, or, rather, in the brief replies which he made to Herman's questions and remarks, for farther than this he seemed little disposed to enter into conversation. Then the amount of work which he accomplished, through his great strength and his steady industry, surprised Herman; his indifference to the cold, also, seemed very strange to one of Herman's temperament, which was peculiarly sensitive to it. When he paid him his wages at the end of the first day, he told him that if he liked to remain in the village, he would try to help him get employment about the mills. At the end of the second day, he determined to invite him into the office, and have some conversation with him respecting his history and plans.

Accordingly, M'Donner came in about sunset with his axe in his hand. Herman laid aside his book, and asked his guest to sit down. M'Donner advanced to a chair which Herman had previously set for him, and moving it back some distance, he took his seat.

"Oh, sit up to the fire, Mr. M'Donner," said Herman; "it's cold."

"No, sir, I thank you, I'm not cold."

"Why, it's going to be a terrible night. The air actually stings."

"It's a pretty sharp air," said M'Donner.

"Well, Mr. M'Donner," said Herman, not knowing ex-

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Herman questions M'Donner in respect to his history.

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actly how to commence his inquiries, "you have done two pretty good days' works for me."

"Well, sir," said M'Donner, "I hope you are satisfied."

"Yes, I am more than satisfied. And now," he continued, taking up the tongs to stir the fire, by way of finding employment for his hands and eyes, "I don't want you to tell me any more about yourself than is perfectly agreeable, but if I knew a little about your history, I could perhaps help you more effectually about getting work."

M'Donner was in an awkward dilemma. He must either confess his crime, or else make up a story, and impose upon a man who was acting as his benefactor.

After a moment's pause, Herman continued :

"Have you a family, Mr. M'Donner?"

"No, sir, only my mother."

Here was another pause ; and just as Herman was about to speak again, M'Donner came fully to the decision that he would not, and could not, deceive such a friend, and, raising his eyes from the floor, he said,

"I was in hopes, sir, that you would not have asked me any questions about my past life. I can not tell a very good story—that is, if I tell the truth. I want to begin anew."

There was an expression of uneasiness and distress upon the speaker's countenance, which convinced Herman that there was some heavy burden upon his mind.

"I do not calculate now," he continued, "upon any thing more in this world ; if I could only get prepared for another, I should be easy."

"Well," said Herman, "and why don't you prepare ? The way is very plain."

Mr. M'Donner shook his head despairingly, but made no reply.

"Are you in the habit of prayer?" said Herman.

"I *can't* pray," said M'Donner, emphatically.

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M'Donner's account of himself.He says he *can not* pray.

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"*Can't!*" replied Herman; "why not?"

"Oh, *I can not*," he answered, bitterly. "I get so wretched sometimes that I resolve that I *will* pray, but then, before I begin to speak, I feel that I am only driven into God's presence by remorse and terror, and I stand there aghast, as it were, and stupefied. I can not utter a word from the heart."

"Why, Mr. M'Donner, you need have no such apprehensions. It is perfectly right for you to go into the presence of God, and carry all your sins with you, and lay them before him. He will receive you kindly, and forgive your sins, and make you his child, no matter what or how great your sins may have been."

Mr. M'Donner was silent, but the expression of deep anxiety and suffering was as decided as before.

"Even if you are driven into God's presence," continued Herman, "by remorse and terror, that should not discourage you. It is right that we should feel remorse and terror at the thought of sins unforgiven. Now, if you really wish to give up your sins, and henceforth serve your Maker, the way is open entirely. You can go and confess them, and they will certainly be forgiven. You do desire, do you not, to be forgiven, and to sin no more?"

M'Donner, after a moment's hesitation, raised his eyes, and said, in an agitated voice,

"No," said he, "I can not honestly say I do; and there's the misery of it. The fact is, I don't really and honestly wish to have God reign over me. I have been an Atheist; but now I know there *is* a God, and I am uneasy and miserable under that idea. I mean to give up my sins; but if it was not for this gnawing of conscience, this wretched remorse and despair, I know I should love sin still. I know what the law of God is well enough; I have had good instruction in my day, but I don't really want to obey it.

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Herman's counsel.

M'Donner thinks his case is hopeless.

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That's the honest truth, and now I want to know with what face you think I can go to God and pray."

Herman was silent in his turn.

"I can't utter a sentence but what my heart rises up and gives my words the lie."

"But now think of it a moment, Mr. M'Donner," said Herman, after a moment's pause: "here you are, a creature of God; he has made you, and has kept you alive, and been your benefactor and friend all your days. His law is exactly calculated to make you happy here and hereafter. He offers you forgiveness for all your past sins, and will come, if you wish it, and be your companion and friend, if you desire to give up sin, and henceforth to love and serve him. Now does not the idea of having such a being come and dwell with you, so that you can go to him at all times, and carry all your troubles to him, and feel that you are always under his protection—does not this appear pleasant and alluring to you?"

M'Donner was silent. His look was downcast, and Herman observed an almost imperceptible shake of the head, as if his heart secretly shrank back from the picture of communion with God which he had drawn. He rose, took up his hat, which he had previously laid down by the side of his chair, and fixing his stern eye, which seemed to possess at this moment an unusually wild and anxious expression, upon Herman, he said,

"No, sir; I am very much obliged to you for your good will, but it is of no use for me to attempt to be a Christian. My sins haunt me, but I don't repent of them. They come up before me when I am alone like horrible spectres. I stare stupidly at them, but have no relenting. It is not possible that I can be forgiven with the hard and rebellious spirit I still feel within me, and there is no power on earth that can change it."

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Herman instructs M'Donner how to pray.

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He spoke these words with an emphasis and an energy which led Herman to see that further argument with him was useless. He was utterly at a loss what to do or say.

"Mr. M'Donner," said he at length, "you believe that I am your friend?"

"Yes, sir," said M'Donner, solemnly, "most certainly I do."

"Well, now, I want to ask you to do something to-night, and you must promise me that you will do it. I am going to prescribe a course for you to take. I shall tell you exactly what, but you must promise me beforehand that you will follow my directions."

"Tell me what it is."

"No," said Herman, "not till you promise."

"You are going to tell me to pray," said M'Donner, turning away and going toward the door. "*I can not pray.*"

"Stop one moment. I will tell you without the promise, and then the responsibility will be upon you."

"Well," said M'Donner, turning round and facing Herman with an earnest gaze, while his hand was upon the latch of the door.

"As soon as you get out of the office, remember that God is near you, looking into your inmost soul. Remember that he knows all about your heart, your past life, your present despairing and wretched condition. Now call upon him to save you. Confess to him your moral helplessness and ruin as you have confessed it to me, and beg him to have mercy upon you, and change you. Do not ask him to forgive you; ask him first to change you from a rebel to a humble child. Pray first for the right spirit of mind now, and ask for pardon for the past afterward. In a word, throw yourself on the mercy of God as a worthless, helpless slave of sin, in chains and fetters, and pray him to deliver you.

"Then, sir," he continued, taking out a small hymn-book

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Herman gives M'Donner a hymn-book.M'Donner goes away.

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from a drawer in the table, and turning to the index as if looking for a particular hymn, "when you get home, just before you go to rest for the night, kneel down by your bedside and read this hymn," turning down a leaf at the page. "You must not look at it till then; but then open the book, and read the hymn aloud, and make it the language of your own heart in the presence of your Maker."

M'Donner seemed reluctant to take the book. He remained motionless, his hand still fixed upon the door.

"Yes, Mr. M'Donner," said he, advancing toward him, "take the book, by all means, and do not go by the great willow, I charge you, until you have begun your prayer. The salvation of your soul may depend upon it.

M'Donner received the book, scarcely conscious of what he was doing, opened the door slowly, and, without looking round or speaking again, disappeared. Herman resumed his seat, rested his elbow upon the arm of his chair, and his forehead in his hand, and remained many minutes silent and motionless. He seemed to realize more fully than he had ever done before the necessity of the interposition of a power greater than human to bring the hard, impatient, and stubborn heart to the humble submission and filial gentleness and love which the divine law required.

In the mean time M'Donner sallied forth in the piercing cold. It was evening. The streets of the village were silent and solitary. Every window was curtained with gossamer veils of frost-work, through which the light from the fires within gleamed faintly. M'Donner saw just before him a large willow upon the bank of the stream. It was a very ancient tree, and the extremities of its long branches, which in the summer season had bathed themselves in the stream, were now held by the firm gripe of the glassy ice, and over the tree Orion began faintly to appear in the eastern sky.

He draws near to the willow.

His conflict of mind.

"That is the willow," said he to himself, "I suppose." He paused just before he came opposite, as if spellbound. "Shall I pass it? Then I shall be doubly condemned. It will be a new, deliberate, determined, cold-blooded rejection of God."

Here he turned round and began slowly to retrace his steps, to gain a little time to think.

"You dare not go by," thundered Conscience.

"You *can not* pray," muttered Self-will.

"Nonsense!" said M'Donner, aloud, turning abruptly around and walking toward the tree; "what has this willow-tree to do with my praying? I will go home, and then do as I please."

"This is the crisis, the very turning-point in your fate," gently whispered the Spirit of God, just in time to arrest his footsteps under the very branches of the tree. "Yield—yield now; you must yield, or you are lost forever."

M'Donner stood for a moment as if staggered by a blow, and then, hardly sensible of what he was doing, he sank down upon his knees at the foot of the tree; and cried, "I *will* pray. 'O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' " He then, as if astonished at what he had done, suddenly started up again. He pulled his coarse checked handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped the perspiration



M'DONNER PRAYING.



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A great change takes place in M'Donner's feelings.

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from his brow. He walked hurriedly along, and for want of language of his own, he began to repeat the Lord's prayer in a confused and broken manner. He remembered only detached clauses of it, and these in no regular order. Still, it was the opening of an intercourse with God. He had felt himself directly in the presence of God before, but it had been with averted looks. His soul now turned its regards toward God, and he felt himself in an entirely new moral position. The long silence between him and his Creator had been broken. He had been before God! He had spoken to him! He seemed to be in a new world.

A sort of strange exhilaration appeared to come over his soul—a sudden gleam of moral sunshine. He felt submissive, he thought, and he wondered that he had not felt submissive before. His heart bounded upward toward God, and a gleam of joy, half real and half an hallucination, almost intoxicated him.

But unhappy M'Donner! In half an hour this sudden burst of light was over, and he was plunged in melancholy and despair darker and gloomier than before. He stood leaning over the rude railing of the bridge, gazing down into the dark water which murmured between the piers, and along the edges of the great cakes of ice which had got wedged among them. He was seriously pondering the question whether he should not plunge in, and end his suspense and misery together.

Leaning forward thus, he felt the pressure of the little hymn-book which he had put into the pocket of his jacket at his side. This turned the current of his thoughts. He wondered what the hymn might be. From being overwhelmed with anguish and despair, his heart surrendered itself to a trivial curiosity. He walked slowly toward his home.

It was rather a rude cabin, and filled with noisy inmates,

The hymn.

The effect of the sentiment of it.

Expiation for sin.

where M'Donner had engaged his board and lodging, and he was glad to retire to his little room at an early hour. He put his light upon a chair without a back, which stood at the head of his bed. The light was a candle's end, supported by three nails driven a little way into a small block of wood for a candlestick. Then taking out his book, he opened at the place where the leaf was turned down; he kneeled before his rude bed, and read, in a slow and broken voice, the following well-known hymn of Cowper's:

"There is a fountain, fill'd with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day;  
And there may I, as vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved—to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing thy power to save,  
When this poor, lisping, faltering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave."

Nothing can be more exceptionable scarcely in a rhetorical point of view than the scripture mataphor of washing out stains in a fountain of blood, and the great truth intended by it is apparently liable to very formidable philosophical exceptions. But it possesses a strange and almost magical power to subdue and soothe the stormy agitations

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The instincts of the soul demand an expiation for sin.

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of remorse and despair. The hard, unrelenting spirit, fixed as it was in an almost spasmodic rigidity, when M'Donner opened the book, melted away under the very first stanza, uttered in the slow and distinct tones with which he read it.

"And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Wash all their guilt away."

His mind did not stop to philosophize about it. He had no clear theological views of the nature of the redemption purchased by Christ. He only felt deeply his own guilt and condemnation. There was something in the very word *blood* which soothed and satisfied that instinct of justice which seemed to demand some satisfaction for his sins. He did not think of Jesus Christ as literally *punished* in his stead, but as in some way or other, he knew not how, *suffering* in his stead; and it seemed more possible that forgiveness might be procured for him by another's exertions and pain, than that it could come of course, simply because now, hemmed in and harassed by the consequences of guilt, he was willing to leave off sinning. At least, if this is not the explanation, we can not easily account for the fact that it is so difficult to assuage the anguish of a spirit really troubled with a sense of its sins, except through some ideas of an *expiation*—some difficulty or suffering incurred by the innocent, through which, in some way or other, the forgiveness is procured.

At any rate, M'Donner read this hymn without any very distinct idea further than that of heavy sorrows and sufferings borne by the Savior for him, and he was deeply affected by it. He was softened—he was subdued. He read the hymn slowly, verse by verse. There seemed to be something in the very sound of the words which soothed and quieted the anguish of his mind, and substituted tenderer emotions in the place of the hard, unyielding agony

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M'Donner wakes the next morning as wretched as ever.

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he had endured. The remorse and terror were changed to simple sorrow. God whose aspect had before seemed cold, distant, and forbidding, now seemed to draw near, and, seen through a Savior's suffering for his salvation, appeared irresistibly alluring ; and he began to think that, after all, it might be possible for him to love him. Lost in these feelings, he gradually sank to sleep.

The next morning when he arose, and recalled the events of the preceding day, the new-born feelings of apparent penitence and love did not return with the recollections. He convinced himself that all had been a dream or delusion, and went out to his work nearly as dejected and wretched as before. His feelings were less acute, but they seemed to subside into a settled despondency and gloom.

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The weather changes again.

Pleasant winter's day.

Francisco.

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## CHAPTER III.

## FRANCISCO.

THE third day the intense cold began to moderate. The mercury in the little thermometer which was hanging in a glass tube at James's back window slowly rose to "Zero," and from Zero half way to "Freezing;" and the morning of the fourth day was as delightful as a winter morning can be. The air was calm, and the sky was clear, except that a low, hazy-looking cloud extended along the horizon at the southwest. The streets in the village again gave some signs of life and motion, and the boys came gradually forth from the chimney corners, to try the strength of the ice upon the stream, or to see in what condition the thaw had left them their old coasting-places.

Herman sallied forth soon after breakfast in pursuit of his cousin James. He found him in a sort of stoop, in a sunny angle behind his father's house, examining and repairing skates and sleds for his younger brothers. There were two of them, Francisco and William. William was a quiet, placid-looking boy, with a blooming countenance and full cheeks, and an easy, contented air. He was trying on a pair of skates, one knee resting upon the floor of the stoop as he attempted to adjust his heel to its place upon the heel-brad. Francisco was taller, a year and a half older, more slender in his form, and paler and more intellectual in the cast of his countenance. He stood before James, who was seated upon a bench adjusting the

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Francisco's account of his lending his skates to Amos.

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rigging of his skates, and he seemed to be watching the progress of the work with great intentness.

"How came your skate broken so?" said James.

"Why, Amos broke it."

"Amos who?"

"Cousin Amos. I lent my skates to him last time I went a skating, because he had not any."

"Did you?" said James. "I am very glad to hear that. It is a sign that you are growing a kind and accommodating boy. What made you think to lend them to him?"

"Why, he had none of his own, and he asked me to lend mine to him, and so I thought I would."

"I am very glad you did, Francisco. That is the way to get along in the world; lend, give, and share, as much as you can."

James was much pleased with this specimen of Francisco's liberality, for he had generally had the credit of being rather a selfish boy. In fact, he usually displayed a considerable degree of sagacity in looking out for his own ends. When the boys were coasting, he was generally found to be sooner or later in possession of the best sled in the company. If they were playing horses, Francisco was the driver; and if any body was riding, drawn upon trucks or a sled, he was almost always, somehow or other, the one; and his share of the apples or the chestnuts, or any other joint property, was commonly the lion's share. He was under a very firm and energetic government from his father and mother, in the administration of which James himself co-operated very effectually as a sort of vizier, and thus he was effectually restrained from attaining his ends by any gross acts of tyranny or oppression. But he generally succeeded in accomplishing his designs by negotiation and manœuvring, so as to keep the law on his side, as the phrase is, while yet he still followed the impulses of a self-

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Francisco's adroitness and good management.

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ish spirit. In fact, Francisco was a perfect prototype of an ordinary man of the world, and he bid fair to make a very promising and respectable man. Of course, as he grew up, experience, and the common frictions of life, would gradually teach him to keep his motives and principles of action a little more out of view, and this was all that would be necessary to make him a very worthy, respectable, and influential member of society, as the world goes. I am aware that there are some views of philosophical theology that may be disturbed a little by such a representation, but as a sober matter of fact it is too obvious to be denied.

It is very strange, too, how different we view things in children and in men. The same principles and conduct, which in a question of sweetmeats or toys between two playmates in a yard or in a parlor we consider unamiable and selfish to the last degree, is tolerated very readily among men in the serious business of life, and is even approved as very commendable prudence and policy. At any rate, Francisco evinced capacities for business beyond his years. James was accordingly pleased at this instance of his generosity.

"And what did you do while he was skating on your skates?" asked Ellen. Ellen was about eleven years of age. She stood with Francisco, looking over James's work, with a warm bonnet upon her head, and a small fur cape over her shoulders. She was a beautiful, blue-eyed girl, with much of William's bloom and Francisco's intellect combined in her cast of countenance.

"Oh, I staid about there," said Francisco, "by the shore."

"Cracking the nuts," said William, carelessly, trying to strike the heel of his boot into its place upon the skate.

"What nuts?" said James.

Francisco looked a little uneasy, and moved upon his feet restlessly, but did not answer.

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The truth comes out about the skates.Herman arrives.

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"What nuts were they, William?" said James, asking Francisco at the same moment to hold the end of a strap, while he bored a hole with his penknife in the leather to admit the tongue of a buckle.

"Why, you see," replied William, "Fanky wanted cousin Amos to give him some nuts, and said, if he would, he would let him have his skates a little while."

"Ah! that was the way, was it?" said James; "a trade, hey? How many nuts did he give you, Fanky?"

"Most a pocket full," said Francisco.

"And how long did you let him have the skates?"

"Why—I don't know exactly how long it was."

"It was as long as the nuts lasted," said William, rising up and staggering a step or two on his skates. "He was to have the skates as much time as it took Fanky to eat up the nuts. He cracked them on a stone by the side of the ice."

James experienced a feeling of disappointment and sadness at this spoiling of the supposed deed of generosity, but he could not help smiling at the nature of the trade. Francisco looked a little awkwardly, and Ellen, who had listened with a very serious expression of countenance to the account of the transaction, said at last,

"It was not all the nuts he had, was it, Francisco?"

Francisco did not reply; William said he believed it was; but at that moment the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Herman.

Herman came to propose an expedition on the ice. The water below the mills, in the little river, and all about the mouth of it, on the lake, was generally open in the winter season, for some mysterious reason which the village philosophers did not very well understand. It flowed on in a dark, deep, and smooth current, not rapid enough to prevent congelation, yet there was rarely any thing more than



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The mouth of the brook.Effects of the late cold.

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a narrow border of ice upon the banks until the intensest cold of the winter had set in. At the mouth of the stream, too, a dark and dangerous-looking spot of open water usually extended far out into the lake, and remained open for weeks after the surrounding surface was firmly closed, its sides contracting or expanding according to the intensity of the cold. The skaters from the village were consequently obliged, on their sleighing and skating parties, to go down to the shore of the lake, at some distance from their dwellings, in order to take the ice, excepting for a few days after one of those cold "snaps," as they were called, which we have described. At other times the mouth of the brook was held in great dread. Even when skimmed over a little by a few cold nights, its smooth, glassy surface, darker than that of the rest of the pond, was eyed suspiciously from a distance; in fact, the whole spot was considered as the very image and symbol of treachery and death. In their imaginations, the villagers almost personified the spot, and regarded the dark and quiet depth of the water as a treacherous foe lurking for their destruction.

It was generally only about two or three times in each winter that the extreme and continued intensity of the cold gave them a temporary triumph over their common enemy. Then a sheet of clear blue ice, two or three inches in thickness, spread itself over the whole. It bridged the stream thoroughly to its very mouth; it closed over the long opening in the lake, and brought a smooth and solid highway from the broad fields of skating ground beyond up to the very streets of the village. It was in reference to this state of things that Herman now came to propose the expedition.

"Oh, let me go with you, James, do," said Francisco, eagerly.

"And William and I," said Ellen, a little more timidly.

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Conversation among the children about going on the ice.

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William had gone out at the door, and was trying to skate a little upon the rough ice in the yard.

James made no reply, but began to talk with Herman about the details of the plan, and Francisco said,

"No, Ellen, you can't go, and you needn't ask."

"Why can't I go?" said Ellen.

"Why, there is not room for more than one on the sled, and if any body goes, I must."

"But why must you go any more than William or I?" said Ellen, in a pleasant tone.

"Because I am the oldest."

"No," said Ellen, "I am older than you."

"But I am the oldest boy," said Francisco, "and girls don't go a skating. Besides, I spoke first."

Ellen looked a little saddened and disappointed, but said no more.

In the mean time, Herman and James had gone off from the stoop toward the barn, talking busily together. Francisco ran after them. William, encumbered by his skates, could not follow; and Ellen, with a dejected countenance, followed, balancing in her mind the possibilities of her being allowed to go too. Her mind was suddenly relieved from its suspense by seeing Francisco coming back from the barn, running and leaping for joy, and calling out,

"We are all going—Ellen, we are all going; we must be ready at the front door in a quarter of an hour."

In the midst of their preparations for departure, William was heard complaining that he could not find his mittens. There was a little shelf in the back entry, near the stoop, where his and Francisco's equipments were kept—their caps, great-coats, boots, and mittens. But William could not find his mittens. He looked high and low, under this, and behind that, but in vain. He appealed to his mother, who was in the kitchen. She made the very sagacious re-

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The lost mittens.

Ellen finds them.

Francisco's injustice.

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mark, so often made in such cases, that "they must be somewhere," and bid him go and look again. After another fruitless search, he renewed his appeal to her. She was busy, and told him that if he could not take care of his mittens, she could not leave her work to go and find them for him; and the poor boy, in great trouble, and with the utmost difficulty restraining his tears, went after Ellen. He found her in the parlor hooking her cloak, and she said she would go and help him find his mittens."

"Don't be troubled, Willy," she said; "I'll find them, I dare say."

William followed his sister, as soon as she was ready, out to the entry, and taking up a cap or two, and a woollen comforter which lay there, she said, pointing to a corner of the shelf with a smile,

"There are your mittens, William. I told you I could find them; and what a fine pair of eyes you have got," she continued, patting him gently on the cheek.

But William did not seem to enter into this pleasantry at all. His countenance retained its anxious and unhappy expression, and he replied, taking the mittens and examining them at the same time,

"No, these are not mine; they are Francisco's. Mine did not have any holes in them;" and he thrust his fore finger, at the same time, into one of the mittens, and showed Ellen the tip of it through a hole in one of the thumbs.

"Then I suppose Francisco has got yours," she said; "let us go and see."

They went to the front door, where they found Francisco, all equipped, with mittens on his hands.

"You have got my mittens, Francisco, I believe," said William.

"No," said Francisco, rubbing his hands together, "these are my mittens; I found them by my cap."

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Further conversation about the mittens.

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"Let me look, and see if they have got holes in them," said William; "yours had holes in the thumbs."

"No," replied Francisco, walking away, "I don't care any thing about that; these are mine, I know. I found them by my cap."

"Now, Francisco," said Ellen, "I would not do so. If those are William's mittens, you ought to give them to him."

"No," replied Francisco, "I don't want those other mittens; my thumbs will ache through those holes all day."

"So will William's," said Ellen; "and he ought to have them, if they are his."

Francisco showed no disposition to give up, but remained playing with his skates in sullen silence. William sat upon the steps of the door, brushing away the tears that would come in spite of all his efforts; and Ellen stood by him, looking upon him with an expression of sympathy and affection, and holding the thumb-worn mittens in her hands.

"I'll tell you what we will do, William; you may have my good, warm gloves — my Angola gloves," and at the same instant she began to draw off the gloves from her slender fingers.

"And then your thumbs will ache just as much," said William.

"No," Ellen replied, "I can fold them all up in my cloak, and I don't think they will be cold at all. I wish Francisco had told me there were holes in his thumbs yesterday, then I would have mended them. I can darn."

Ellen then ran through the kitchen to find William's skates for him while he was putting on the Angola gloves. On her passage through, her mother asked her if they had found William's mittens, and she said they had. As she returned with the skates, she asked where, and thus Ellen

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Ellen undertakes to mend the mittens.

Undeserved reproaches.

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was led to tell the whole story. Her mother told her to go and tell Francisco to give William his mittens.

"But, mother, we have got it all fixed now, and he may have them if he wants them."

"No," she replied, "he must not have them; give him his own."

Accordingly, Ellen returned to the door, and told Francisco that his mother said he must give William his mittens and take his own.

Francisco drew off the mittens which he was wearing with a sullen air, tossed them to William, and walked into the house, saying, in a half-desponding and half-petulant tone,

"Well, I suppose I can't go."

"Why, yes," said Ellen, "you can go. I will lend you my Angola gloves."

"But I don't like gloves; they always make my fingers colder."

"Then perhaps I shall have time to mend your mittens. I'll run and get a darning-needle and see."

In a minute or two Ellen was busily at work, seated in the sun, on the steps of the front door, running the threads of her yarn back and forth over the hole in one of the thumbs, and then crossing them by others, running the point of her needle alternately above and under. She had finished one of the mittens, and was fairly under way with the second, when James and Herman appeared, drawing a large framed sled over the icy surface of the ground.

"There are the children," said James, "all ready. No, Ellen is at work mending something or other. That's the way with these girls," he continued; "just as you are ready to set off, they're always sitting down mending their gloves. Ellen, my child, why don't you keep your things in order, and then you'll always be ready?"

The sled comes.

Manner of loading it.

Big basket.

Ellen looked up to him, but did not answer. There are some minds of such a constitution that they seem to experience a peculiar feeling of pleasure in bearing an undeserved reproach. They never defend themselves, but quietly submit, and, in silence and solitude, and sometimes even in tears, enjoy the thought of having suffered injustice. Ellen's was of this cast; and as James and Herman immediately busied themselves in lashing a pretty large square basket upon the sled with a cord which they had brought for the purpose, she went on silently, but in a hurried manner, with her work, and finished it. She had seen the mittens drawn fairly upon Francisco's hands, glanced at his look of satisfaction, put her needle and ball of yarn in its place, returned to the step of the door, and was just pulling her Angola glove again over her own fingers, when Herman tied the last knot in the lashing, and James, rising from the work, said,

"Now, then—all ready? Ellen—got your gloves mended, have you, at last? Well, you have not made us wait much, after all."

The sled was a large-sized framed sled, with a long tongue, and with two upright stakes fastened at the sides behind. The square basket had been lashed upon it close to these stakes, so that it made a comfortable seat. When all was ready, Herman and James gave orders that the boys should go on, down to a certain rock on the margin of the stream, where there was a good place to get on and off the ice, and they said that they would follow, leading Ellen, as it was too slippery for her to walk alone. The boys accordingly set off in high glee, the straps of their skates having been tied together and passed across over their shoulders, the skates themselves dangling down before.

Thus accoutred, the boys went on in advance. They passed along the street a short distance toward the stream,

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The ice is very smooth and transparent.Making the arrangements.

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and when pretty near the bank, they turned off into a sort of sled-road, which led at first through a scattered wood, and at length into a dense thicket. In the midst of the thicket they came suddenly upon the bank of the stream. A high, ragged rock was upon one side, close to the shore, and the dark, glassy ice spread itself out before them.

The ice was so smooth and transparent that it appeared almost like the surface of the water itself, and the children were afraid to venture upon it. James and Herman were, however, close behind, and they, without stopping to examine the ice, slid boldly off at once from the shore. They immediately put on their skates, and after striking a few circles, as if to test their fitting, they helped the boys to put on theirs. Herman then took out a small axe, which had been placed upon the sled before they set out, in a sort of socket made for the purpose, like that which teamsters fix to the sides of their carts. When fixed in its place, its edge was down, the side of the axe being against the side of the sled, forward, the handle extending along behind. It was thus secure in its position, and also entirely out of the way. With this axe Herman cut down a tall young maple which grew upon the bank, and, trimming off its top and branches, he formed a slender pole, which he brought to the sled.

He then replaced the axe, and lifted Ellen to her seat upon the basket, which was lashed to the sled. He removed the stakes from behind, and placed them in holes near the middle of the sled, and then carefully lashed the pole on one side of the stakes with a strong cord. The pole was thus secured in a position at right angles to the sled, and about two feet above it, and the extremities extended out several feet on each side. The two boys then grasped these extremities, supporting themselves by them, while James and Herman took hold of the cross-handle at the end of the tongue, and when all was ready, they began

The ride.

Ellen's observations.

Beauty of the stream.



THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

slowly to glide along over the smooth surface of the little stream.

Ellen rode very comfortably upon her basket, with her cloak wrapped around her, and her hands enveloped in its folds. It seemed, as we have before said, like skimming the surface of the water itself, for the ice was pure and transparent, and all that indicated its congealed condition was the large plume-like radiations which ornamented the surface. The stream was a winding one, and its banks were overhung with thickets; and as they passed along from reach to reach, and bend to bend, Ellen was in a state of rapturous delight as she gazed down, as Fergus had done under circumstances somewhat similar, upon the varying exhibitions in the water beneath her.

"Oh, William!" she exclaimed, half talking to herself and half to her brother, "oh, how deep the water is here!"



*Ellen's soliloquy.**They come out upon the pond.*

I can hardly see the bottom. Oh, here is a great tree down in the water; here are the branches; there! it is gone by; now it is deep again. No it isn't—it is growing shallow; there is an old slab. Oh, how sandy! Look, William! see! all yellow sand and bulrushes—see the bulrushes! Oh, I wish I had some to make a cap of! Now I see some rocks. Oh, how fast they move away under us!”

But here her soliloquy was interrupted by a soft of side-long or “slueing” motion in the sled. She looked up, and found that they had reached the mouth of the stream, and were now wheeling round the point of land out into the open lake.

This sheet of water was a collection of ponds rather than a lake. It was very irregular in its form, though in one direction, toward the northwest, it extended twenty or thirty miles. Our party were intending to turn off farther to the westward into a deep bay which penetrated to a considerable distance among the forests and mountains, terminating at length in a dark glen, the very picture of wildness and solitude. It was Herman's favorite retreat, whether he was out in a calm, pleasant winter morning like this, upon his skates, or in a summer's afternoon, on board their little sail-boat, which, sometimes under its white sail and sometimes propelled by oars, had often plowed the waters in that direction. After emerging from between the two points which formed the mouth of the little stream, the skaters seemed almost instinctively to turn toward their favorite retreat.

The large opening, which had extended from the mouth of the brook, and had been closed by the recent cold, appeared almost an opening still; for the new ice which had been formed over it was clear and transparent, showing the dark waters below as if their surface was still exposed. Thus the spot that had been an opening was still a dark

The white ice.

The island.

The party stop to rest.

patch, which formed a strong contrast with the lighter-colored ice beyond, that had been whitened with snows, though its surface was now bright and polished from the freezing of the water left upon it by the thaw. As they glided on, therefore, Ellen was startled at the suddenness of the change when they passed the strong line of demarcation which separated the new ice from the old; then she experienced a feeling of relief, as if she was moving upon a more secure and solid road; and then, a moment afterward, began to regret the change, as her "prospect," as she called it, was all cut off by the opacity of the surface which now separated them from the waters below. She raised her head, therefore, and began to look around.

They were making for a rocky island, covered with firs and other evergreens, which appeared about a mile ahead of them. It was their stopping-place—a sort of harbor where James and Herman were accustomed to put in, for a few minutes, to rest, whether they were moving upon skates or on a keel. They accordingly wheeled round up to the sunny side of it, and Herman and James took their seats upon a log which lay upon the shore close to the edge of the ice. While they were sitting there, Francisco asked his brother to allow him and William to see if they could not draw Ellen themselves.

"How far do you want to go?"

"Oh, only around the island," said Ellen, looking up from her seat upon the sled.

"Well, away with you," said James.

The boys took hold of the tongue of the sled, which had been dropped upon the ice, and moved slowly away. Francisco, however, appeared, from some reason or other, to move rather reluctantly, and just as they had disappeared around a point of rock, he returned, with a serious and uneasy expression upon his countenance.

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Francisco makes a confession.Herman's suppositions.

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"Well, Francisco," said James, as he drew slowly near, "what now?"

"Oh, nothing—only those were not Ellen's gloves that she was mending; they were my mittens."

"Your mittens, hey, was it?" said James: "that alters the case. I must speak to her about it. But I am glad you told me, Francisco; always be honest, even if you expose yourself by it."

"Come, Francisco," called Ellen from behind the rock.

Francisco looked around with an uneasy and hurried air, as if he ought to go, and yet had something more to say.

"And—and," said Francisco, puzzled to compress the full confession which he wished to make into the moment's time he had to make it in, "and—"

"Francisco," said William, appearing at the point of the rock with a countenance of ludicrous displeasure, and in a very grave and emphatic tone, "Francisco, why *don't* you come along?"

"Run along, Francisco," said Herman, coolly, "and tell us about it some other time."

"That is just like Francisco," said James. "Always doing something wrong, and always coming to confess it. And as to Ellen, I believe I never censured her in my life without being sorry for it afterward."

"I suppose *she* got him to come and tell you," said Herman.

"No, indeed," replied James, "not she. She never says a word in self-defense; sometimes I think she loves to be blamed unjustly. She gets found fault with half of the time when any mischief is done, but in the end it turns out that Francisco was at the bottom of it, and he comes of his own accord and confesses. If there ever was a real Christian of his years, I believe that he is one."

"What! Francisco?" said Herman, with astonishment.

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James's account of Francisco.Evidences of piety.

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"Yes, Francisco," replied James. "His natural character is far less amiable and gentle than Ellen's and William's. In fact, he used to be what you would call a cold, calculating, selfish, contrary boy. But he is fast changing his character. Even now he does not ordinarily appear as well as Ellen and William, but I have a great deal more confidence in his piety."

"I am surprised to hear that. I should have said exactly the reverse."

"Why, that depends upon what we mean by piety. If we mean general good character, amiableness, habits of submissiveness to parents, and good temper, why, William and Ellen stand far above him. But if we mean a new principle of love to God, and a desire to confess and forsake sin, then Francisco gives a great deal more evidence of it than either of them. I do not know that I ever observed in William a single instance of honest, spontaneous confession of a fault; but from Francisco nothing is more common. But then Francisco commits ten faults to William's one, and two years ago it was a hundred to one. He is improving very fast. I believe he is very regular at his devotions every day, and he certainly feels the influence of religious considerations when I talk with him more than any boy I ever knew. William seems scarcely to feel them at all."

Herman need not have been so surprised. On a moment's reflection, he perceived that there was no ground for surprise. In fact, no one could consider James's view unsound who could believe that Peter was a true Christian and Pilate was not, when the former was denying his master and the latter was endeavoring to save his life. Piety is not mere docility and amiableness of temperament and character, nor does it effect at once an entire transformation of the moral condition of the soul. The change it ef-

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First the blade.Francisco and William return to the party.

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fects is radical in its nature, but it is at first very incomplete and partial in degree. It is a new principle struggling feebly for existence among a thousand hostile elements. Its dawning in the soul is like an occasional gleam of light in a dark and gloomy cavern; it is a plant springing up among overtopping weeds, which for a long time overshadow and conceal it. The Christian, therefore, is not always marked by his committing fewer open sins than any other man, but by his being truly penitent and humble before Almighty God for those which he is guilty of committing.

"There's some mystery about this affair," continued James, "which he wants to explain, I know by his looks. I wish you would talk with him about it. You will have some opportunity in the course of the day."

James had scarcely time to make this proposal before the little party appeared again, having made the circuit of the island. Francisco and William were propelling the sled, skating laboriously by the side of it, taking hold of their pole. The tongue they had thrown over back, so that it rested upon the centre of the pole, before Ellen. Herman and James rose from their seat and resumed their places in front, and in a few minutes they were again in motion, sweeping away from the island with great speed.

They reached at length a rocky shore, and ran along for half a mile under it, ragged cliffs, perpendicular from the water's edge, frowning upon them from the shore. It was now noon, and this range of rocks faced the south, so that it gave them a warm and sheltered position. At length the precipice abruptly terminated, and a woody dell appeared in its stead, with the mouth of a small stream opening into it. At the corner formed by the bank of this stream and the rocky shore was a sort of chasm, opening toward the lake, which was used by James and Herman as

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The party arrive at the encamping ground.They build a fire.

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a harbor for their boat in summer, while in winter it afforded them a shelter from the winds, and a convenient place for their fire. There were seats in abundance among the shelving and trap-like rocks around and within the chasm, and as they usually made their fire upon the ice opposite to the mouth of this opening, it made a very good encampment. The sled was drawn into the chasm. The lashings of the basket were loosened and removed, and then they took off the basket itself and placed it upon a shelf among the rocks. James opened it, and took out a hatchet and a box of matches, while Herman untied the pole from the top of the sled-stakes, and took the axe out of its socket.

"Now, boys," said James, "*we* will go along the shore of the brook, and throw wood out upon the ice, and you must draw it along to the fire."

James and Herman accordingly took off their skates, and one arming himself with the axe and the other with the hatchet, they took each one bank of the stream upon the land, while William and Francisco skated along upon the ice, and Ellen followed, drawing the sled, maintaining a precarious footing upon the glassy surface by means of her moccasins. James and Herman threw out sticks, bushes, small logs, branches, roots, every dry combustible, in short, which they could find, while Francisco and William dragged the largest of them to their encampment, and Ellen loaded her sled with the smaller ones. Half a cord of dry and half-decayed rubbish was thus soon collected before the chasm in the rock, and was soon after enveloped in crackling flames. It threw floods of warmth into the chasm, and lighted it up in a very cheerful manner. The party then opened their basket, and using the sled for a table, began to prepare their dinner.

The preparation of the fire consumed an hour, and the dinner nearly two; for there were apples to roast, and a

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Herman goes away with Francisco alone.Confidential conversation.

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pie to warm, and bread to toast, and many other such simple processes of cookery to be performed. After dinner, the skaters rigged on their skates again, and coasted along in pursuit of additional fuel to rekindle their fire, while Ellen remained near it, pushing in the brands, or climbing up upon the rocks around.

At length Herman proposed to give Francisco a ride; and having seated him upon the sled, and put the stakes in behind, with the pole lashed across, he found he could propel him easily by pushing there, and in this position he could easily converse with him, as their heads were brought very near together. In this way Herman drove the sled before him rapidly out upon the ice, and wheeling around in a sweeping curve, he headed his craft up the little stream, and soon disappeared from Ellen's view, who sat watching them from the summit of a rock.

"Does this go well, Francisco?" said Herman.

"Delightfully," replied Francisco.

"Francisco," continued Herman, after a moment's pause, "what was it that you were going to tell James and me down there at the island?"

"I was only going to tell *James*," replied Francisco.

"Oh!" said Herman, and then there followed another pause.

"I suppose you would rather not tell *me*?" continued Herman.

"Why, I don't know exactly," said Francisco, in a hesitating tone.

But his reluctance was soon overcome by Herman's conciliating manner, and he told the whole story.

"And you knew that they were William's mittens all the time?" said Herman.

"Why, yes," said Francisco, "I knew *mine* had holes in them."

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Evil effects of sin.Six persons made to suffer by Francisco's fault.

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"So it was a plain case of injustice—deliberate, intentional injustice."

Francisco did not answer.

"Observe now, Francisco," continued Herman, "how the bad consequences of sin spread themselves all around. You took William's mittens, and kept them five minutes unjustly, and it brought more or less suffering upon six different persons."

"Six!" said Francisco; "not six."

"Yes, six, I believe. There was your mother, who was troubled at first because William could not find his mittens, and then because she thought that he had been careless about them, and at last she was probably pained still more when she learned that you had taken them away from him. Then there is James, which makes two, and I am three. It is painful to us to find that you are selfish and unjust. Then Ellen is four; it caused her considerable trouble and suffering. Among the rest, she had to bear blame that she did not deserve, for James thought she was the one that was not ready. William is five: he suffered in two ways."

"What two ways?" asked Francisco.

"Why, first he suffered from disappointment when he found he could not have his mittens; and then, what was worse than that, there was the painful feeling of being oppressed by an older and bigger boy."

"Are those *two* kinds?"

"Yes, certainly. Suppose you had a half-dollar, and a boy should come up and take it away from you by violence, wouldn't it give you more pain than if you should only lose it yourself accidentally in some way?"

"Why, yes," said Francisco, "I think it would. But that makes only five."

"You are the sixth, yourself. The sin has made *you* feel unhappy, hasn't it?"



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Herman's opinion of Francisco's penitence.

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Francisco acknowledged that it had.

Herman had by this time ascended as far up the stream as it was possible to go. The banks had become contracted, and a log, which had fallen across, had dammed up the water a little, and caused a ripple, through which the water gurgled under the ice, and forbade any farther progress. He accordingly stopped the sled, helped Francisco off, and seated himself upon the log with the boy by his side.

Herman was disappointed in Francisco's confession. He was accustomed, himself, to such solemn views of all subjects connected with God and eternity, and especially with the confession of sin, that it seemed to him that Francisco appeared very easy and cool for a sincere penitent. The boy had been evidently interested in the conversation; but then, on the other hand, he had been almost as much interested in the varied scenery on the banks of the stream, as they advanced in it up from the shores of the lake. Herman sat accordingly in silence a moment, slowly tapping the ice with the heel of his skate, hesitating what to say next, when, after a moment's pause, Francisco looked up in his face with an earnest and serious, and yet perfectly collected look, and said,

"Well, cousin Herman, I am sorry, truly, and I hope I shall never do so again."

He said this with a certain tone of earnestness and cordiality, but without the least of that solemnity of manner which Herman had been accustomed to consider as almost necessarily belonging to the language of penitence and confession. This solemn tone and look are indeed very often assumed; not in hypocrisy, exactly, but as a manner suitable and proper to the occasion; and few prayers are uttered in an honest, natural tone. However this may be, Herman was somewhat encouraged by the evident naturalness and honesty of Francisco's look.

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Francisco is desirous of making some amends.

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"Well, Francisco," said he, "I am glad to hear you say so; and what are you going to do about this case?"

"Why, what can I do?" said Francisco.

"You can go and confess the sin to God, if you wish to, and ask him to forgive you."

"Yes, sir," said Francisco, seriously.

"And I think, if you could do something to Ellen, and William, and the others, to make some amends for the suffering you have occasioned them, it would be well to do it."

"I don't know exactly what I can do," said Francisco, hesitatingly, and in a somewhat desponding tone.

"I don't know myself, exactly," said Herman, "but perhaps some opportunity may occur."

Francisco did not reply, but sat silent and thoughtful, and Herman hardly knew what to think of his state of mind. From what James had said of Francisco's repentance and humility, he had expected deep solemnity, and even tears; and he was disappointed. In fact, wiser persons than Herman are accustomed to measure penitence and piety by the tears.

"Well," thought Herman to himself, "I have done my duty, but I am afraid it is in vain. I will now turn the conversation. I can judge by the readiness with which his mind is diverted whether any real impression has been made upon it."

"Francisco," said he, pointing to a precipice which overhung the stream a little below them, "there is a high rock."

"Oh yes!" said Francisco, starting up from his seat, and pulling his cousin by the hand; "let us go and climb to the top of it."

"But I have got skates upon my feet," replied Herman.

"Never mind," said Francisco; "you can take them off in a minute. Come, I will unbuckle the straps for you."

He was just stooping down to the straps when his move-

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Herman is mistaken.

The water gurgling under the log.

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ment was arrested by the sound of voices below. He looked, and saw James and William skating slowly along toward them, with Ellen between them holding a hand of each. They were just coming into view at a bend in the little stream below. James was skating very slowly, to allow William and Ellen to keep pace with him. Francisco raised a loud shout, and, abandoning Herman, started off to meet them as fast as he could make his way over the ice. Herman sighed. "It is," thought he, "like water upon a rock indeed."

But Herman was mistaken. It was, in this case, only water upon somewhat rocky ground. The penitence was feeble enough, it is true, in Francisco's mind, yet still there was penitence there, and, though feeble, it was honest and genuine. Herman thought, as thousands of parents have done in similar circumstances, that his efforts and instructions were thrown away. They did not draw tears, and he therefore concluded they did not produce feeling. But they did produce feeling—that feeling, too, which leads to acts, not merely that which spends itself in solemn looks and tears.

Francisco brought Ellen and William to look at the water as it gurgled with a peculiar waving appearance under the ice at the ripple, which he had been noticing with interest in the midst of Herman's conversation, and then, with them, he explored all the picturesque nooks and corners of the deep glen into which they had penetrated, James and Herman being all the time seated upon the log. But when this excitement was over, his mind recurred to the subject of his sin, and he began to wish he had an opportunity to make his confession to God.

The desire increased as he followed the party slowly down the stream. He had proposed to Ellen to get upon the sled and ride back, and in doing it he spoke in a sort

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Francisco's prayer.Effect of his penitence on his general demeanor.

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of subdued and pleasant tone, which indicated a great change in the state of his feelings since the morning. As they moved on, he gradually lingered behind. He busied himself in pulling out a pole from a heap of brush upon the shore, and then, watching his opportunity when the rest of the party had disappeared from view in a winding of the stream, he darted off from the ice into the thicket, until he was in a place entirely concealed from view, and kneeling down by the side of a fallen tree, he offered his prayer as follows :

“ O God, I have been unjust and selfish to William and my sister Ellen, and so I have committed a great sin. O God, forgive me—this once more—for Jesus’ sake, who died to save me from my sins, and give me some way to make them amends ; and bless my cousin Herman, and my brother James, for all their kindness to me. Amen.”

He rose from his knees, and put his cap upon his head, for he had taken it off from an involuntary feeling of reverence at the moment when he kneeled. It was a brief and even a hurried prayer, but it was an honest one. Francisco scrambled back to the ice, and before long overtook his companions. He tried to think of some mode of “ making amends ” to William and Ellen, but he could not. There seemed to be nothing that he could do for them, or for Herman, or James. His desire, however, to please them all gave that kind and gentle tone to his voice, and that mild expression to his eye, which constitute so great a charm in the manners of a child. He was not conscious of it, but he really did communicate a great deal of pleasure. His prayer was heard and granted, as sincere prayers often are, not merely in a way that he did not anticipate, but in one which he did not even perceive when it came.

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The party sit around their camp-fire and talk together.

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The shades of evening were now drawing near. The party intended to return by moonlight, and as the moon did not rise until seven o'clock, there would consequently be, at that season of the year, an hour of darkness before her silvery illumination would appear. They replenished their fire, and after the last rays of the sun faded away in the west, its bright flashes of light threw their encampment in the chasm into a glow, and beamed out over the dark ice until they were lost in distance and obscurity. James and Herman sat upon the rocks, with the children around them, sheltered from the evening air by the cliffs above them, and warmed by the radiation of the fire. They talked of the expeditions of their earlier days, related to their little auditors the adventures they had met with years before, with boats, logs, rafts, and in sleighing parties on the various arms and branches of the lake. During all this time, too, they were eating their supper, drawn, like their dinner, from the basket. Herman after a time left the party, that he might ramble away along the coast into the darkness, or sit upon some solitary rock, enjoying the strong contrast between the utter silence and desolation around him, and the bright and busy scene presented at the encampment, which looked like a focus of light and brilliancy in the midst of a vast region of darkness and gloom.

At last he heard a distant noise. He listened. It was a ringing sound, at a great distance upon the ice. He heard voices too. It was like the sound of shouts at a distance so remote that they fell faint and almost inaudible upon the ear. He returned to the encampment, and told James that he could hear the skaters from the village out upon the lake, and that they had better commence their preparations for a return, or the men and boys would come and pay them a visit, allured, like moths and millers, by the light of the fire.

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A party of mill-men come to the camp.Their skate-rigging.

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"Very well, let them come," said James.

"Yes," said Herman, "let them come; but then we may as well have our things put up, for river-drivers and mill-men are not always the most mild and courteous visitors, especially to such a scene as this."

Herman's prediction in respect to the probability of a visit, at least, was soon verified, for the voices, and the sound of the skates ringing over the ice gradually grew nearer and nearer, and by the time James's packing was done, four or five strong, athletic, and rough-looking men came up into the illuminated region, and wheeling round in great curves, intersecting each other, "came to," as a sailor would express it, at a respectful distance from the fire. There they stood, their forms and features brightly illuminated and relieved, so to speak, against the very darkness beyond.

"Come on, boys," said James, in a loud voice, "come on, and warm yourselves by our fire."

The men came up with gratified looks, but in silence, and stood near the fire, gazing upon it with a look of bewildered pleasure and with dazzled eyes. Their feet, most strongly illuminated, presented a curious specimen of the varieties of rigging. Some had skates too large and some too small; and they were odd or in pairs, as the case might be. They were fastened in every mode—leather straps sewed by any body but a saddler, and cords knotted and tied in every way. Their numbers were gradually increased by the coming up of the rear, formed by those who had been outstripped by the more able and skillful skaters. At first they seemed to be somewhat calmed, at least, by the presence of their hosts; but their natural ease and coarseness of manners soon returned, and Ellen regarded with awe, and almost with terror, their uncouth forms, and rough movements, and loud vociferations.

At length, the foremost of them, perceiving, from the

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James gives his visitors the fire.Heap of embers left.

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basket lashed to the sled and other indications, that the party were apparently about ready to leave their encampment, advanced to James, and, touching his hat respectfully with one hand, while he pointed to the blazing heap of fuel with the other, asked if they had done with that fire.

"Why, yes," said James, looking at Herman, "I believe we have about done with it."

"Then, sir," said the man, "we will be much obliged to you if you will give it to us."

An old-established skating-ground has its common law as well as the most refined kingdom on the globe, and James, mentally running over its provisions in respect to the title to fires built out of the common stores of fuel, saw that his claim to the exclusive possession was too doubtful to be pressed, even if he had desired to press it; so, after a moment's pause, he told his rude guests they were welcome to it.

"Well, then," replied the leader, "here goes. We'll make a run back by torch-light."

So saying, he seized a flaming brand, and waving it in the air over his head, moved swiftly away. In replenishing their fire, James and Herman had put on a large number of pitch-pine knots, which, being highly inflammable, are always in great requisition for forest bonfires. These the men and boys seized by the extremities which had been turned from the fire, and away they went in all directions, waving the blazing torches in the air, and carrying their flashing light far off into the dimness and obscurity around. Not much more than a heap of embers and smouldering brands was left upon the fire; but the owners of it did not much regret their loss. They were repaid by the highly picturesque effect of these moving lights. As they gradually receded, the bearers of them disappeared from view, and the lights themselves only were seen, like meteors,

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The moon rising.The party of skaters come back again.

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flashing, and waving, and wheeling over the surface of the lake, diminishing and still diminishing as they receded, until they dwindled to faint stars, wandering slowly hither and thither, and were at last, one by one, gradually extinguished and lost.

Just as the last one was fading from view, Ellen's eye discovered the glow of a bright light in the eastern horizon, illuminating the mists which had gathered there. She said it must be a fire, but James told her it was the moon, and in a few minutes the bright orb appeared, slowly swelling and ascending among the trees. Her cold and silvery light restored to the party a dim vision of the lake again, and reproduced the outlines of the opposite shores. James and Herman immediately commenced preparations for their return. They put Ellen again upon the seat on the basket. The axe was fitted into its socket, and the boys established in their positions at the sides; and then, bidding farewell to their encampment, the party began to move slowly along the rocky shore, regulating their pace by the feeble skating powers of Francisco and William.

They had not proceeded far before they heard again the sound of skaters approaching, and in a few minutes half a dozen of the roughest of their former visitors advanced into view, their dark forms relieved against the bright reflections of the moonbeams upon the glassy ice. They advanced rapidly, wheeled around our party, and came up alongside of them as they moved steadily on. One of them had a long slender pole in his hand. James felt a little uneasy and anxious. They had been civil thus far, it is true, but he supposed that the continuance of their civility and good-humor rested on a very precarious footing. He had, however, no cause for any such apprehensions. The men knew him very well, though he did not know them. They had a thousand pleasant associations connected with



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The skaters propose to draw Ellen home.Arrangements made.

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his own and Herman's character; stories of kindness to the sick and the distressed, in which they had been the actors, had been often in circulation among them, and their only feeling in this somewhat unceremonious visit was honest good-will. After a moment's pause, the same leader who had spoken at the fire ranged up to James, and, touching his hat as before, said,

"Much obliged to you for the use of your fire, gentlemen. We have come back to help give this young lady a ride home."

They then produced their pole, and showed a sort of hook in one end, which was formed by part of a branch. They explained that they wished to hook that upon the tongue of the sled, so that they could all apply their strength to the little vehicle, and then, as their organ of communication expressed it, "we can put the steam up at once, and show the young lady how to cross a lake by moonlight without a boat."

James looked at Herman inquiringly; Herman said nothing, but the expression of his face was rather that of curiosity and pleasure than distrust.

"But we have got these two boys in tow," replied James, turning to his wild-looking company. "How will they get along?"

"Oh," replied a stout-built, round-faced lumber-man who was among them, "let them hold their feet still, and they will go fast enough. We will take the whole concern along together."

James consented to the arrangement. The pole was hooked on; the men eagerly grasped it, in pairs, one on each side. The boys were told to put their feet together and grasp their cross-pole strongly, and Ellen's arms were brought out through the arm-holes of her cloak, so that she too could take hold of the cross-pole in the middle where it passed before her.

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Rapid run over the ice.James and his party reach home.

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"Now, my lads, steady ahead!" said the foremost of the gang; "keep the stroke, for we are in close quarters."

The evolutions of skaters are so expanded that they would seem to require a large space to enable them to move with freedom; but if they keep the step, far less space is required than would be supposed. They can advance very rapidly arm in arm, or in pretty close proximity in column. The party understood this, and accordingly moved slowly at first, in order to secure simultaneousness and harmony of action. As they advanced their strokes became more rapid and vigorous, until in a very few minutes Ellen was bounding over the ice with a speed which she had never experienced before. As they passed along, they met one and another of their former visitors, who had followed those that now acted as team. These all wheeled round as they came up, and fell in with the train, pressing on in full cry, Ellen's heart beating high with an excitement in which delight and awe, almost amounting to terror, were strangely mingled.

James and Herman kept pace with the others for some time, but their strength was soon exhausted, and they were reduced to the boys' condition of lying on their oars. In this way the whole group pressed on, and in a very short time after the commencement of their motion, they swept round into the mouth of the mill-stream, and came to a stand at the rock where James and Herman had first come upon the ice, with shouts that made the whole forest ring. Without waiting a moment, the men unhooked their pole and were off immediately down the stream, followed by all their savage-looking retainers. Their voices gradually died away, and left our little party once more to solitude and themselves.

James and Herman began to take off their own skates, and to loosen the straps of those of the boys. Just as they

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Man dragging a board.

Storm coming on.

M'Donner.

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were ready to move off to the land, Herman pointed across the little stream in silence. They looked and saw a man moving slowly along under the shadow of the opposite bank, dragging a board six or eight feet long. As soon as he had passed, Herman asked James what he supposed he was going to do with that board.

"Oh, it is for some of their frolicking, I suppose ; but come, we must go. I believe we are going to have a storm to-morrow."

Herman saw that there was a circle around the moon, and a general mistiness in the sky. The wind, too, was moaning through the tops of the trees. They hastened along toward home, thinking no more of the stranger. It was M'Donner. But, to explain his present condition and plans, we must go back a few hours in our narrative.

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M'Donner unexpectedly encounters Mr. Stock.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## THE ICE-BOAT.

ON the morning of the day when James and Herman went on their skating expedition, as they were leaving the house, the children having gone before them, they met M'Donner walking along with his axe upon his shoulder. Herman asked him if he had any work for the day. He replied that he had not, and James immediately offered to employ him.

"You may go into the yard there, and chop wood," said he, pointing back. "There is my father, now. I see his head over the fence; tell him I sent you."

M'Donner went into the yard. The man whom James had referred to as his father stood with his back toward him as he advanced, examining a sleigh, and as M'Donner approached him, he observed that he was stooping down to look at the runners. M'Donner stopped and stood in silence a moment, waiting till the gentleman should be at leisure to attend to him. At length the latter raised himself up, and turned round and looked M'Donner in the face. It was Squire Stock, his old fellow-traveler.

The parties looked at each other for some seconds with an expression of bewildered astonishment. Both thought of the bundle of clothes which was hooked up from the brook, though, of course, neither of them alluded to it. After some commonplace remarks of recognition, Mr. Stock left M'Donner at his work, resolving to consider seriously what he should do.

Mr. Stock comes to talk with M'Donner at his work.

The conversation.

Just before noon, as his workman was about to go to dinner, the lawyer came out and addressed him as follows :

"Mr. M'Donner, I have something to say to you, and I want you to promise me, before I begin, that you will not now make any reply whatever."

"That is a strange condition," said M'Donner.

"You will see the reason of it before I get through."

M'Donner hesitated.

"I think it probable that I owe you my life, and now do you think that I can do or say any thing except from friendly feelings toward you?"

"Well, sir," said M'Donner, planting one foot upon the log of wood before him, and leaning upon his axe-handle

as upon a staff, and then looking the lawyer full in the face, "go on, then, upon your own conditions."

"You are not safe here. Soon after you left us at the ferry, you were suspected. The ferryman strove to conceal the circumstance of the bundle, but it leaked out, and they searched for you up and down the river, but in vain. Now you are here, appearing in open day, and



M'DONNER AND SQUIRE STOCK.

under your own name too. I do not ask whether you are innocent or guilty. I do not want to know, nor to expose you to the temptation of telling me a falsehood ; that is the

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Mr. Stock gives M'Donner warning of his danger.

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reason why I wished you not to reply. Your boldness, at any rate, looks like innocence. All I wanted to say is, that, guilty or innocent, I don't think you are very safe here. I shall not myself move against you; you may work for me as long as you please, but I thought it best for me to give you fair warning."

So saying, he turned away, as if to go back to the house.

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," said M'Donner.

M'Donner then coolly finished cutting and splitting the log which he was at work upon, and shouldered his axe and walked away.

"He has gone off without his pay," said the lawyer to himself, looking out at the window; "however, he'll call and see me before he goes out of town."

Two hours afterward, as Mr. Stock was coming into his office, he was surprised to hear the sound of an axe in the yard. He went to the window, and saw M'Donner there at work just as before. He thought it strange. He had no doubt of his guilt, for he had seen in a newspaper the account of the escape of a person of the same name from the county where the first attempt had been made to arrest M'Donner, and he supposed that this was unquestionably the man. Still, such a boldness and composure seemed inconsistent with guilt, and he began to be seriously at a loss what to make of the affair.

M'Donner was, in fact, in more serious danger than even Mr. Stock supposed. He had been suspected by others in the town, and a plan was concerted for his arrest that evening. He had, however, himself discovered it all, and was taking his measures accordingly. He satisfied himself that, although he was watched a good deal during the day, the attempt to arrest him would not be made until evening, unless he should preceitate it by some action of his own. His true policy, therefore, was to go on with his ordinary

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M'Donner forms his plan.Materials for constructing the ice-boat.

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employments with as much composure and apparent unconcern as he could assume.

In acting his part, he was aided very much not only by his characteristic fortitude and self-command, but by a sort of feeling of desperation, or rather despair, which had gradually been gaining upon him, and which rendered him, in a great measure, indifferent in respect to what might befall him. A person is sometimes really indifferent to life, while yet he will instinctively take vigorous measures to preserve it. If a wretch, bent on suicide, and just about to throw himself from a bridge, were to be attacked by an assassin, he would doubtless turn to defend himself, and would fight valiantly for a life which just before he was going to throw away. It was somewhat so with M'Donner. He really cared little whether he was at liberty or in prison, and yet this very indifference made him more perfectly cool and collected in arranging the plans for escape which an involuntary instinct impelled him to form.

He worked at his wood until dark, and then, calling at the office, received his pay, and went home to his supper. After supper he put on his great-coat, and went to an obscure store in the village, where he bought a hatchet and some small nails. The hatchet he let down into the capacious pocket of his coat, and then walked toward the mill. From a huge pile of slabs and boards which lay beneath it on the bank, he selected a wide and thick board, about six feet long. This board he carried and dragged along down the stream to its junction with the lake, and there concealed it carefully in the thicket. He then returned and got a bundle which he had previously secreted near the bank of the brook, not far from the village, and carried it down to the place where he had deposited his board. He looked at the skaters, who were still making the ice resound with their evolutions far out upon the lake, and then at the halo

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Storm coming on.M'Donner's mode of procuring skates.

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round the moon. He listened to the rising wind moaning fitfully among the trees.

"Breeze away!" said he to himself. "I hope it will blow a hurricane, and I will fly away upon the wings of it."

M'Donner had not dared to attempt to make his escape by land, for he foresaw a snow-storm, and knew that he should be tracked. He observed that there was a prospect of a high wind, and in such a direction, too, as to blow *along* the chain of lakes, and he had conceived the idea of constructing a rude ice-boat, and making his escape by means of it more rapidly than would be possible in any other way. He thought, also, that if the wind should fail him, or change in its direction, he should still be safest on the lake, for he could then work his way upon skates faster and more secure from pursuit than he could travel on land.

Accordingly, having placed his materials and implements in a place of safety near the mouth of the brook, he began to return toward the village. It would be necessary for him, in some way or other, to get possession of two pairs of skates to form the runners for his ice-boat. He hesitated for a moment as to the best mode, but finally concluded upon the following. He stationed himself near the landing, where the skaters were accustomed to pass off and on, and after watching them as they came in from the ice, sometimes singly and sometimes in groups, he at length, when he saw one approaching who he thought would answer his purpose, came out of his retreat, and managed so as to be coming down upon the ice just as the other advanced to the landing to come off.

"Well, Hiro," said M'Donner, "what sort of skating is it on the lake?"

"Real," replied Hiro, stooping down to unfasten his gear.

"You come just in time to lend me your skates."



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Mode of constructing the ice-boat.Increasing signs of a storm.

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"I don't know about that," said Hiro. "When I lend my skates, I am very apt not to see them again."

"Then you must sell them to me," said M'Donner. "What are they worth?"

"Half a dollar."

"Half a dollar?" said M'Donner; "is that the lowest?"

"Yes, the lowest cent," said Hiro; and the usual dialogue in such cases ensued, resulting, however, in M'Donner's purchasing the skates and paying the money. He dropped the skates into his pocket, and then, after waiting fifteen minutes more, he made a precisely similar trade with another tired and jaded skater. His preparations were now complete, and he accordingly again made his way to the point of land where his other articles were concealed, taking care to avoid being observed by the parties returning from the lake.

M'Donner was familiar with the construction of the ice-boat, though he attempted, at this time, only a very rude imitation of one. He took one pair of his skates, and with the hammer head of his hatchet he bent down those curved ends of the irons which rise in front above the wood, so that the wood would lie flat upon the board. He then laid these skates, face down, upon the two back corners of his board, nailing them on firmly with nails driven through the sides of the wood. In the same manner he fastened the other pair of skates upon the front corners, only in this case he left the curved ends of the irons projecting in front. Then, on turning the board over, it rested on the skates as upon runners, and he found that it would glide very smoothly and easily over the ice. While he was doing this, the wind continued to rise, the haziness in the sky increased, and the number of the skaters out upon the ice before him gradually diminished, until the lake was restored almost to its native solitude.

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The sail.	Mode of rigging it.	M'Donner sets off from the shore.
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The next thing was to make the sail. For this purpose M'Donner drew out a square, blanket-like looking piece of cloth from his bundle, and he contrived to stretch it upon a rude frame which he made of poles lashed at the corners. The sail being thus extended, he succeeded in securing it in an upright position upon his board, nailing the lower side of the frame to the board, and securing the top by cords running in the direction of stays.

Both sets of runners being *fixed*, M'Donner had no means of steering, but must, of necessity, run in a straight line, and directly before the wind. The wind, however, was fair for carrying him in the longest direction of the lake, in which direction the water extended in nearly a right line for twenty or thirty miles. M'Donner thought that if the wind should blow hard, and the ice not become obstructed by falling snow, he might perhaps be carried over the whole distance by occasionally drawing his ice-boat round an island, or out into the middle of the pond again, if the wind should chance to drive him ashore. Then listening carefully for some time to satisfy himself that the last skater from the village had returned, and that the "coast was clear," he took his ice-boat from under the shelter of the shore, where he had constructed it, and drew it out upon the open ice; and then, while he was putting his tools and remaining materials into his pocket, he looked cautiously around to notice once more the indications as to the weather.

A high wind was evidently rising from the southeast; the sky was becoming decidedly overcast, and even a few flakes of snow began to fall. A gust of wind started the boat as it lay by the side of M'Donner, and it almost made its escape. He sprang forward and seized it; he turned it round so as to present the edge of the sail to the wind, and then pressed his foot upon it while he completed his preparations. When at length all was ready, he put his boat's

Picture of the ice-boat.

Rapidity of its flight.



THE ICE-BOAT.

head before the wind, seated himself upon it, and immediately began to move slowly along.

After gliding on a few rods, the motion became slower and slower, and finally ceased. A fresh gust of wind, however, soon started him again, though with very gentle motion. He was yet, in some degree, sheltered by the shore, though his course was somewhat oblique to it. He was, however, gradually gaining an offing, and of course his rude sail felt the influence of an increasing breeze. The motion soon became steady, and it was evident that it was gradually accelerated. In fact, the wind was rapidly rising, though to M'Donner's sensations it was the reverse; for, as he was moving *with* it, the faster he advanced the less he felt its impulse. In the course of fifteen minutes he considered himself fairly under way, running along, as nearly as he could judge, at the rate of four or five miles an hour.

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Appearance of the ice as M'Donner glided over it.

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But M'Donner was anxious and uneasy. He was not yet beyond the reach of pursuit. A party of good skaters would easily overtake him, if, by any means, his going off upon the ice had been discovered. He had his plan formed in case of being pursued: it was, to knock off the front pair of skates from his ice-boat, and put them upon his feet as quick as possible, and make his way to the nearest point of the shore, where he had no doubt he could easily conceal himself in the forests. But he was by no means certain of being able to reach the shore before being cut off. He felt, therefore, eager and impatient to go on. He was vexed with the gentleness of the wind that chilled his shoulders and whistled by his ears; for, though the resistance to motion was reduced to the very gentle friction of skate-irons upon glassy ice, his velocity was much less than that of the storm.

The land which he had left was now so far behind him, and the other shore so distant, that he soon had no other mode of judging of his velocity than to watch the gliding by of the ice under his runners. It seemed as if his boat was still, and all the ice in motion. The lake appeared to him like a vast river, covered with fields of ice, which were borne down by a rapid current, his rude vehicle being at rest upon its surface, retained by some magic power, while the vast glassy field, with its white patches and its dark patches, its crevices and bubbles, its smooth spots and rough spots, all swept majestically along beneath him. M'Donner soon began to think his speed was getting to be pretty high. On the right, the shore was here at about half a mile distant. He saw a bold promontory projecting from it a short distance before him. The moon was almost entirely obscured by the clouds, but the dark form of the promontory, crowned with evergreens, made itself visible, relieved against the gray sky; and as it rose into view,

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M'Donner goes over a breathing-hole.It begins to snow.

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swept on with a majestic motion till it came abeam, and then moved heavily away behind him, it convinced him that he was going too fast to fear pursuers. He felt relieved. He fretted no more about the wind, but felt its pressure upon his back, and heard its distant roaring in the forests upon the shore with satisfaction and pleasure.

"Now," thought he, "I am safe." But scarcely was the thought conceived before the aspect of the ice suddenly changed from that gray or whitish color which old ice coated with snow and rain necessarily assumes, to perfect blackness. He was startled. He seemed to be, for the moment, gliding over the naked surface of the water ten miles to the hour. An instant after, the black ice as suddenly disappeared, and he was running along over the old gray formation as before. "It was a breathing-hole," said M'Donner to himself, with a feeling of horror, "just skimmed over by the last cold. What is to prevent my coming upon one which is not skimmed over?"

"Well, so be it," he added, after a momentary pause; "I must take what comes."

Presently he began to feel an occasional tingling at his ears; and he heard a sharp clicking sound upon the ice around him, as if of falling snow or hail. This was not very favorable, though, as the wind seemed still to be rising, M'Donner did not complain. The only danger that he thought of was the obstruction which snow would make to the movement of his runners. There was, however, another danger. The falling snow, though very little reached the ground, thickened and obscured the atmosphere. He soon lost all distinct vision of the shores. Now and then a dark mass came into view, and moved slowly off behind him as he went booming on, but he could distinguish nothing plainly. The moon entirely disappeared, and he seemed flying along over a scene of wintry desolation, the earth

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He draws near to an island.His very narrow escape.

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turned into gray ice beneath him, and the atmosphere into haziness and snow above.

At this time there suddenly loomed up before him a dark mass, dimly seen, but advancing with great velocity, and rising and swelling as it came on. It seemed a monster bearing down upon him for his destruction. His eyes were strained intensely upon it, and the thoughts passed his mind in rapid succession, "It is an island; it is coming down to the right of me; I shall just weather it. That rocky point reaching out toward me will just trip me up. I shall be dashed to pieces;" and, at the same instant, he swept by, just clearing the rough and ragged ledge, and running on with the speed of a rail-car until the whole mass disappeared again in the mists and haziness behind him.

This occurrence admonished our navigator of the necessity of a careful look-out ahead. To be dashed against a rocky shore, or even against one that was not rocky, at the speed at which he was going, would have brought his adventures to a very sudden close. And, after all, his means of guarding against such a danger were very slender. He had no way of bringing up his craft very suddenly. His only resource seemed to be to throw himself off upon the ice, to extinguish his own motion by the friction of his clothes upon the surface, and to let his fated vessel dash on.

He took out his knife and deliberately cut a hole in the sail, that he might see what was before him. It was necessary for him to sit abaft of the sail, both because there was not room for him before, and also because it was necessary to bring the chief friction upon the pair of runners which were behind, otherwise the ice-boat would not keep her position in the line of the wind; for, to secure this, it was necessary that the centre of resistance should be behind the centre of impulse, as in an arrow the impelling

Midnight.

Land.

The boat runs ashore.

momentum is in the heavy head which leads, while the chief resistance is in the feathered end which follows.

Having thus made an opening through the sail, he kept up a careful watch, and began to feel comparatively secure.

In the mean time the gale increased, and M'Donner went booming on. He passed islands and points of land, and once or twice he found himself for some time gradually approaching land; but then either a change in the direction of the wind or a curvature of the shore caused him to recede so as to gain a new offing. He went on thus till midnight. The falling of the snow increased also, until the whole surface of the ice was covered with little wreaths, which went scudding along over the smooth surface by his side like clouds in a tempest. He seemed to be running a race with them, though, light and airy as they were, they all left him behind.

At length he saw a long shore at a considerable distance on the left. He seemed to be going nearly parallel to it, and yet it appeared, after a time, to be somewhat nearer to him. Perhaps the air was more clear, so that he saw it more distinctly; at least he hoped it was so. He was, however, soon compelled to relinquish this hope. He drew nearer and nearer. He could distinguish the forms of the trees, and hear very plainly the loud howling of the wind in their branches as the coast swept swiftly away behind him. He could soon see the beach; it was smooth and sandy, and he was running at prodigious velocity along it, at the distance of a stone's throw, and yet in such a direction that in a very short time he must inevitably run ashore. He shrank back from the necessity as long as he could, but finding a concussion inevitable, he carefully let himself down from his seat upon the ice, and after sliding along a few rods, came to rest, his boat running obliquely up upon the shore at a short distance before him.

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M'Donner reflects on his situation.His native energy.

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M'Donner concluded that he was now ten or fifteen miles from his place of departure ; but that was ten or fifteen miles too little. If he had had any thing like a rudder, he could easily have laid his course off from this shore, the wind being so nearly parallel to it ; but as it was, his only means of getting again under way was to drag his ice-boat out upon the ice away from the shore, so as to get well to windward of it again. He thought then that he might run several miles before he should again encounter it, and it was not impossible that the coast might bear away to the left, so as to enable him afterward to go clear of it altogether. Accordingly, after regaining possession of his boat, he took hold of one side of the frame on which the sail was extended, and began to walk out upon the ice, keeping the boat close by his side, with the edge of the sail as nearly as possible to the wind.

Now, as his motion with the wind had ceased, he felt the whole of its fury, and he perceived that it was an awful storm indeed. M'Donner possessed a fair share of the stern and resolute in his character, but after proceeding a few steps, and observing that no land was in sight before him, the surface of the ice slippery in the extreme, and the wind blowing a hurricane, and howling terrifically in the forests behind, even he was somewhat appalled. He felt, too, a peculiar indisposition to effort. He had a great mind to lie down in the snow and give himself up to his fate. But M'Donner's mind was one of that class which leads a man to keep pressing on in what they have undertaken, even while they are considering whether they had better not stop. The moments of indecision of mind, which will sometimes come, are not allowed to produce indecision of conduct. This had become a settled habit, or, rather, it was a part of his nature ; and so he pushed his way on over the ice by the momentum, as it were, of his past reso-



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M'Donner's mode of working his boat to windward.

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lution, until he had gone so far as almost to lose sight of the shore. He gradually became warmed with the exercise, too, and, in fact, his running ashore at this juncture very probably saved his life. He would soon have become stupid and drowsy with the cold, and then it is but a step, and an easy step too, to insensibility and death.

He worked his way slowly and laboriously out from the shore, which soon disappeared from view, and then he had to guide his steps by the direction of the wind, and by its sound behind him, as it roared among the trees of the forest like surf upon a shore. He went on for half an hour, during which time this sound gradually died away, and as he could hear no similar indications of the vicinity of land before him, he concluded that he had reached the wide part of the lake. He took hold of his boat behind, leaning down over it, and then pushing it along upon the ice, and turning it at the same instant round before the wind, he leaped upon it, and was soon again under way as rapidly as before.

In the mean time the snow began to accumulate a little upon the ice. Here and there it became lodged in small patches, through which M'Donner's runners glided noiselessly, and without much additional resistance. As the snow increased, however, these patches became more frequent, deeper, and more solid, and M'Donner found that his motion was very sensibly retarded by them. He listened occasionally on every side to hear the roaring of the wind in the forests, but these sounds gradually ceased, and thus relieved him of one source of apprehension. The increasing snow, however, embarrassed him. He perceived that when his boat was struggling through one of the little drifts or patches of it, a very heavy strain came upon his sail, and he had to seize the frame once or twice with his hands to prevent its being carried away. At length, in one

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Sail carried away.He determines to abandon the wreck.

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drift, deeper than the rest, his boat came to a stand. He jumped off and dragged it through, and in a moment was again under way on the other side. But in a few minutes more he had the same measure to resort to again. He worked on in this way for half an hour, when at length the frail craft was brought up so suddenly in a bank of snow of unusual depth and density, that the sail was burst from its fastenings, and the top fell over forward into the snow.

McDonner rose from his place, and stood in the drift surveying the wreck. He could have repaired it without much difficulty, but it was plain that, sail or no sail, the boat could go but little farther. He therefore separated the blanket from the frame and put it over his shoulders, securing it by a belt made from his fore and back stays. He then took off the front pair of skates, and, restoring the rigging to them, he fastened them to his feet. He then listened for the sound of the wind upon a forest, as anxious now to find the shore as he had been before to avoid it. But he could hear no sound except the sweeping, whistling rush of the wind over the ice, and the driving snow around him. He therefore determined to bear away to the left, hoping to regain the shore in the direction in which he had left it, when he had dragged his boat out upon the lake : and taking all he wished to carry away from the wreck in a bundle, he left it to be buried in the snow.

By choosing his way among the bare patches of ice, and in the places where the snow was thin, he got along for some time without any great difficulty. But the snow was now falling very fast, and it was not long before his way was very much impeded. In fact, he soon concluded that he could get along without his skates better than with them ; he took them off, and then endeavored to make as straight a track as he could, guiding himself by the wind, which he kept upon his side.

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M'Donner is reduced almost to despair.

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But it was a very laborious and discouraging mode of locomotion. The footing was slippery and treacherous, and the snow was getting deep. Then there was an entire uncertainty whether he was going right or wrong. Besides, M'Donner was now safe from pursuit, and accordingly he felt no longer the excitement of danger. He began to look forward, and inquire what was to be the end of all this effort. "What good will it do me to escape? What am I to escape to? What is there, or can there be, in this world for me?"

He, however, still pressed on. The storm howled over the trackless waste, and beat mercilessly upon his cheek as he toiled laboriously along. At last he said aloud, in a tone of bitter despair, "This is all in vain; I can die as well here as any where. God have mercy on me." And he sank down upon the snow.

After resting motionless for a minute or two, the wind around him lulled, and listening very attentively, he thought he could distinguish a faint sound, as of the roar of a very distant waterfall. Under a sort of instinctive impulse, he sprang up, and moved steadily onward in the direction of the sound, working his way slowly and laboriously through the snow. He soon brought the sound pretty distinctly within hearing, and in a quarter of an hour it became so loud as to satisfy him he was drawing near the shore. A dark unshapen mass presently loomed up before him. Then he could distinguish the forms of the trees and of the rock, and in a moment afterward he was close alongside the land.

The first emotion excited by the appearance of the land was relief and joy; but these feelings were but momentary. He saw at once that he was, after all, no nearer to relief than before. The land was covered with forests, and

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He reaches the land ; walks along under the lee of it.

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presented, at the water's edge, the face of an impenetrable thicket. It was useless to attempt to make his way into it, and if he should succeed in doing so, it would be only to perish. He could find nothing in that wild wood except shelter from the wind. This, however, was something. It seemed to him that he could die more comfortably under the shelter of the trees than out upon the bleak and desolate surface of the lake, exposed defenseless to the whole fury of the storm.

He found, too, that he had gained another advantage by reaching the shore. The wind was blowing somewhat off from the land, so that the ice along the margin was a little under its lee. Thus there was formed, close under the shore, a sort of pathway, where he could walk without much difficulty, the snow being thin and even. He concluded that his only chance for safety now was to walk along the shore, in hopes of finding some road or cattle-path leading down to the water. If he could find one, he knew that it would conduct him to a house. He accordingly went on, at a moderate pace, so as not to exhaust his strength, under the shelter of the trees.

In a short time he became somewhat warmed by his exercise. It was less laborious than it had been upon the lake ; but he was now no longer exposed to the terrible blasts of the wind that had so thoroughly chilled him there. His spirits rose, too, as the warmth returned, and he felt less discouraged. He had matches in his bundle, and a hatchet ; and with these he reflected that he could, at any time, erect himself a hut and build a fire. He had taken care to bring a small supply of provisions in his bundle, so that he saw at once that he was pretty well provided for for twenty-four hours. By that time the storm would most likely be over, and he should then be able to see the country around, and probably discern some dwell-

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M'Donner's doubt and perplexity.He is bewildered and almost stupefied.

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ing, or else the clearing or the smoke which would direct him to one. His strength and his spirits returned, and he felt comparatively safe.

His mind, thus being somewhat relieved from the strong excitements which had been pressing upon it, naturally reverted to the scenes that he had passed through in the village he had left—Herman's kindness to him, his Christian counsel, and the deep religious emotions that he had himself experienced in consequence of them. He suddenly felt a strong desire then to usher himself once more into the presence of God, and thank him for his safety thus far, and commit himself again to his charge. Some feelings, he hardly knew what, perhaps pride, perhaps timidity, restrained him. Conscience pressed it upon him as a duty. A sense of his wretchedness and helplessness almost made him wish to do it. "But what an unfit condition I am in, after all," he said to himself, "to call upon my God. A fugitive from justice. Ask Almighty God to help me escape from the just punishment of my crimes!"

He walked on a moment bewildered, and, in fact, stupefied in some degree by the perplexing question whether he ought or ought not, under those circumstances, to pray. His face was flushed with the reaction of the arterial system from the effects of the cold wind to which he had been exposed. His eyes felt swollen and heavy, and his mind relapsed into a drowsy reverie.

He fancied himself finding a road and following it up until it conducted him to a house, and the question immediately occurred to him how he should account to the people for his appearance in such a place at such a time. "I must have my story ready," thought he; and he began to occupy himself in fabricating some plausible account which would answer the purpose. He got an ingenious and not very improbable story planned, about his belonging to a

Why men can not pray.

Mental struggles.

The prayer.

town across the lake, and being out on a skating-party the evening before, when the storm came on, and then having lost his way. "But then," thought he, "they will corner me by asking questions about the town. I must be a traveler, passing through the place there, and stopping for the night." Here conscience interrupted him, again bringing up, with new earnestness, the question why he did not pray.

There is a mysterious chain which hangs over the soul, and holds it back from prayer, when it is clinging to something which it thinks may be wrong. A man can not pray while he is cherishing sin. The sin rises up before him and rebukes him; it stands directly in his way. Nothing is more common than for men whose consciences are awakened to say they can not pray. It is true, they can not, and for a very simple reason. We can not come to God without relinquishing what he has forbidden.

M'Donner's heart had once submitted to the authority of God, but pride and sin had again, in a great measure, resumed their wonted authority. The struggle, however, was not now of so long duration. It was violent, but short. An old tree lay at a short distance before him, which had fallen over from the shore. More than half of the top was firmly imbedded in the ice. Above, the remains of the branches, dry, broken, and bleached, reared themselves into the air, and the wind whistled through them. M'Donner turned to it with a determined step, kneeled down upon the cold ice, rested his arms upon the trunk, and laid his head upon his arms. He called upon God to come and save him, soul and body. "I am all sin and misery. Every thing is wrong. But come, O my Father, come and take me as I am; here from this point, show me what to do and where to go, and make me obey. O God, change me, create me anew. I throw myself into thy hands. If I am left to myself I am undone."

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M'Donner comes to an opening in the trees.

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He remained for a moment in the position he had assumed, in a sort of musing state of mind. The expressions he had uttered in his prayer were the expressions of despair, and yet he felt relieved by the utterance of them. He seemed to have given himself up, and felt as if he were relieved of responsibility—as if the depraved and intractable spirit which he had himself thus far had the charge of was now committed to the care of another, and he was himself free. His mind rebounded, though slowly and gently, as an imperfectly elastic spring gradually recovers itself when the load is taken off. He rose, and the first impulse was to turn round and go back again to the village he had left, and face the danger. It seemed to him that officers and imprisonment had no terror. He wondered why he had feared them. The utter impossibility of going back was evident after a moment's reflection, and so he went forward as before; but it was with a light and almost happy heart. It was a sort of happy despair. He did not know, and it seemed to him that he did not care, what was to become of him.

It was but a very few minutes after this that he came upon an opening among the trees. The snow covered the whole surface of the ground, but M'Donner's practiced eye recognized a road at once, or rather a pathway, by which cattle from some neighboring farm were probably driven down to be watered. He could see also the openings which had been made with an axe in the ice, now, however, closed over and nearly concealed by the snow, but still plainly discernible, and proving very conclusively that some farmhouse was near.

He turned into this opening with great alacrity. There was, of course, no track, and the snow was getting to be pretty deep; but it lay light upon the ground, and was uniformly distributed, so that he advanced without any diffi-

The cabin in the woods.

Light burning.

M'Donner goes on.

culty. The way led him up a decided ascent, and in a very few minutes he came to an opening in the woods, in which he saw at once a small cluster of buildings. He paused to examine them.

His eye rested first upon a faint flickering light, visible through a single small window in the principal building. It was a rude log hut with one window and one door. The door was closed, and the light above alluded to at the window indicated a fire burning upon the hearth. The inmates of the house, as he supposed, were asleep. It was, in fact, long past midnight. The other buildings were a small log barn and a little sort of shanty, constructed of the same materials, used, as was evident from the shingle bolts about it, now nearly covered with snow, as a shop for manufacturing shingles. It was open toward the south, and was half filled with drifts of snow. All this M'Donner made out without much difficulty by the help of the general light which made its way through the clouds and was reflected from the snow. He moved up toward the door to awaken the occupants and ask admission.

He recalled to his mind the particulars of the story he had fabricated, but somehow or other he now felt a strange unwillingness to resort to it. He must have some story to tell, he well knew, yet he was very unwilling to tell the truth. To refuse to give any account of himself would have been almost as plainly admitting that something was wrong. "But then," said he to himself, "*I can not* and will not lie about it. I have enough to answer for already." He stopped. He was really at a loss to know what to do.

While he was deliberating he wandered on. The snow was not yet very deep, though it was fast falling, and as it was evenly distributed in the woods, he made his way through it without much difficulty. He found no cleared land, no fallen trees, and no signs of even initiatory farm-



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M'Donner builds a fire and encamps for the night.

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ing operations around. Every thing indicated that he had fallen upon a mere shingle weaver's establishment, and that, too, in a situation of such loneliness and solitude as to possess very strong attractions for him. He at once conceived the design of getting employment here ; and in order to increase his chances of being favorably received by the occupant of the hut, he determined to postpone his appearance until the following day. Accordingly, after rambling on for a mile or two in the cart-path, he turned off into the thicket and built a fire. He then made a rude hut of hemlock boughs, or, rather, a shelter just large enough to cover him when lying at length upon the ground, and here he slept soundly until late on the following morning. In the course of the day he presented himself at the shingle weaver's door, and remained there as a guest during the day. He gave only a very general account of his history, and evaded all their particular inquiries. In the course of the day, he showed himself so skillful and efficient in work that he very easily secured his object of being hired by the month, and then at once commenced his labors. He, however, found his mind more and more inclined to solitude, and in the course of a few days he had chosen a spot, where the timber was plenty, a mile or two from his employer, and there he was accustomed to repair, day after day, to pursue his solitary labors. His mind, during most of the hours of the day, was fully occupied with a healthy and pleasant interest in his work ; but at intervals it dwelt a good deal upon his spiritual interests. He formed the habit of daily prayer. His aversion to his former life of ungodliness and sin increased ; and though he had no well-defined hope that his soul was renewed and his sins forgiven, yet his mind was gradually subsiding into a state of comparatively peaceful repose. This resulted from the effect of the present enjoyment which his religious exercises

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He enjoys peaceful communion with God.

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afforded, rather than from any influence they exerted upon his hopes and fears in respect to the future. In fact, he enjoyed many hours of true communion with God in his remote and solitary *shanty*.

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M'Donner's mother.Her lone and destitute condition.

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## CHAPTER V.

## THE MOTHER.

WHEN M'Donner originally made his escape from the officers who attempted to arrest him at his own rude cabin, he left his aged mother there, alone, friendless, imbecile. He had endeavored to make some provision for her, for there was a stronger filial affection in his soul than would have been expected under so rough an exterior. His plan for providing for her having failed, and he himself feeling compelled to make a very precipitate retreat, she was left alone in her solitary dwelling.

It was a rude log hut upon the banks of a rapid stream, in the midst of a forest of indescribable loneliness and solitude, though not very far removed from the dwellings of the other settlers. There was a small stock of very plain provisions in the house, and the old woman tottered about the premises with just sense and reason enough left to prepare her food at tolerably regular intervals. She was accustomed to her son's absences, and for several days she bore her solitude very patiently. During this time, various persons who were upon the watch for the criminal lurked about the house, and occasionally went in and conversed with its decrepit inmate. She generally went by the name of Molly, though no one knew whether this appellation was in some way derived from her real name, or entirely fanciful. It had, however, been her name for years.

After a few months the hope of M'Donner's return be-

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They send her away.She goes home again.

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gan to be given up by the neighbors, and they ceased to keep up so vigilant a watch about his premises. The overseers of the poor, after carrying Molly coarse supplies for a time, concluded to remove her, and place her as a boarder in another poor family, paying her expenses out of the funds of the town. But before this time the poor mother began to mourn bitterly for her son. Her anxiety and grief on his account appeared even to quicken her mental powers, but the excitement did not seem to tend to the restoration of healthy action. It only quickened the morbid action, or, rather, changed its type from idiocy to mania. At first it was a low muttering mania. She would sit in her chair, or walk about the house and yard with a most melancholy face, talking to herself, and asking every body what they had done with her son. She received all sorts of replies, some evasive, some true, some false, but all were equally unsatisfactory to her. She believed nothing, she remembered nothing, but renewed continually the same questions to the same persons day by day.

In order to keep her in her new quarters, it was necessary that she should be closely watched, for on the very first day after she was removed to them she was missed. They searched for her in every direction in the neighborhood, but in vain. At last it occurred to somebody that she might have returned to her former home. On repairing to the place, there they found her, busied about the hut in her usual employments, and nothing but force would suffice to remove her again to her new home. She watched every opportunity to make her escape, and at last, finding that she was always taken and brought back again, she formed the plan of making her escape from the town altogether, and setting off in pursuit of her lost son.

She formed her scheme with the low cunning which generally characterizes the insane. She concealed all signs of

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M'Donner's mother forms a plan to go in pursuit of him.

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discontent; ceased in a great degree to talk about "her boy," as she called him; and she assumed a quiet air, which effectually deceived those that had the charge of her. They at length began to allow her a moderate degree of liberty, and even sometimes sent her of errands to the store at the corner; for, though she was considerably advanced in years, her physical powers were yet in a good degree unimpaired.

At last, one pleasant October morning, they sent her out as usual, and she told them when she went away that they must not expect her back very soon, for she was going to take a walk by the pond while the sunshine lasted; and away she went, with the money which they had given her for her purchases in her hand.

As soon as the unhappy mother had got out of sight of the house which she had left, she turned off from the road, and, by by-paths which she was well acquainted with, made the best of her way out of the town. The excitement of mind that she was under gave her strength, and the quickening influence of it upon her disordered intellect gave her a certain degree of cunning, though it did nothing toward restoring sanity. She gained the highway as soon as she could, not knowing or caring which way it conducted her, excepting that it was leading away from the place of her confinement. She was comfortably though very plainly dressed—that is, comfortably for a sunny morning; but her clothing would afford but a poor protection from the chills of the evening air, or the cold storms which the poor traveler must soon have to encounter.

She walked along the road, watching both before and behind her, very cautiously, and whenever she observed any one coming, she stepped into the thickets by the roadside until the danger had passed by. In this way she wandered on, not knowing whither, till noon. She then ventured to go into a farm-house and beg some food. The people

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M'Donner's mother gets a ride in a wagon.

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questioned her pretty closely, but could get no information. She said that she was going after her boy, but could tell nothing about him except that his name was Amos. They perceived at once that she was deranged, and were half inclined to detain her; but, on reflection, thought it would only bring upon themselves a good deal of useless trouble. So they gave her a dinner and let her go on.

About an hour after this, a large wagon came along behind her. She asked the man to let her ride. He stopped a moment, and looked at the image of age and mental imbecility before him, and asked her where she was going. She did not know; she was going to try to find her son. The wagoner was a man of few words. He was so accustomed to meet with vagabonds and stragglers of every description, that it excited very little curiosity. He perceived in a mo-



THE MOTHER.

ment that she was crazy; and feeling some compassion for her, he told her to get up behind into his wagon, and he would "carry her on a little way."

It was not till toward noon that the family who had charge of her began to inquire of one another what could have become of old Molly, and it was near the middle of the afternoon before they sent some one in search of her. She was, of course, nowhere to be found. They inquired at the store, and inquired at the mill, and then sought for her at her old

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M'Donner's mother talks to herself all the way.Her soliloquies.

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haunt, in the deserted log cabin of her son. It was all in vain. They were compelled to believe that she had really gone. They felt some human sympathy for her age and helplessness, though the main spur, after all, to their activity in the search was the scanty sum of money which had been intrusted to her care. Finally, they concluded that she must have wandered off and got lost in the woods, or else, which was perhaps more probable, that she had drowned herself in the pond.

In the mean time the crazed mother rode on, seated comfortably upon some bags of wheat which lay in the back part of the wagon. She talked in a muttering tone to herself all the way. Sometimes the wagoner listened to her. Her mind was evidently running upon her early years of life, when her son was a boy. The later years seemed to have faded from her memory, and the stimulus of insanity was bringing up with great vigor and distinctness the events and the scenes of years long gone by. Her mind was lost in reverie, and the train of thought and association which passed through it seemed to rise spontaneously to her tongue, and find a low muttering utterance, addressed apparently to no one, and incoherent and rambling.

"Oh, how fast he grew!" she muttered to herself, her head hanging down upon her bosom; "he weighed eight pounds and three quarters exactly, Friday morning, handkerchief and all. Josey got the steelyards in the store. Then, six years after, he reached up to the great latch. If he had only learned as fast as he grew—but he would not go to school. They told me I ought to make him, but I did not want to make him. And one day he went a fishing away up the Beaver brook—and—I wonder what's become of my husband! I haven't seen any thing of him this long time. I believe he's dead. Yes, he's dead; or else Amos is—or else he's gone away."

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Her confused ideas.

She talks about Amos.

The wagoner.

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"What are you talking about, old lady?" called out the wagoner from his seat before.

"I believe he's gone away," continued the mother, in the same tone as before. "I must whip him if I can get him. I ought to have whipped him before, and governed him better; he plagues me all but to death."

"Old lady!" said the wagoner, in a louder tone.

She moved her head a little so as to hear more distinctly, but without raising her eyes.

"What say?" said she.

"What is it you're talking about?"

"About my boy."

"Your boy? Where is your boy?"

"I don't know where he is."

"Don't know?"

"No."

"What is his name?"

"Amos."

"How old is he?"

"I don't know how old he is."

"Well, how big is he, then?"

"Oh, he's a pretty big boy; he grew up very fast; the last I remember of him he was a very large boy. But I haven't seen him this great while. I believe he's run away—yes, he's run away, and I am going after him. No, he hasn't run away; somebody came and carried him off. And they carried me off too, and shut me up, but I got away, and I am going to find my boy, and make him go home to school. Let's see—did he run away? No, I've run away; it's I that have run away."

The wagoner was silent, but he began to think that he must get rid of his fellow-traveler before night, or she might give him more trouble than he was willing to incur. He accordingly told her, about an hour before nightfall, that



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The wagoner dismisses her from the wagon.

She comes to a farm-house.

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he could not carry her any farther, and directed her to get out. He had some scruples about leaving her alone, though, as there were farm-houses scattered all along the road, he concluded that she could get a lodging somewhere. He lightened the burden somewhat upon his mind by giving her a small piece of money to pay for a night's lodging at the next tavern, and as for the rest, he justified himself by saying, as his horses trotted on,

"I pity the old lady—but then I have done my share. If every body along the road does as much for her as I have, she will get on pretty well."

The friendless wanderer journeyed on, talking to herself as before. As soon as the wagoner was out of sight, she sat down upon a stone by the side of the road, and thrusting her hand down into a capacious pocket by her side, she drew out the foot of an old stocking, cut off at the ankle, and darned here and there, in heel and toe, with yarns of divers colors. This was her purse. It was tied up with a piece of knotted tape, which she proceeded to unfasten, slowly and with trembling hands. She added the wagoner's donation to her little store, then wound the tape around again, as it was before, tied it securely, and restored the whole to her pocket. She then arose and walked on.

An hour afterward she came to a tavern, but she passed by on the other side. It was about sunset, but as she had been resting a while in the wagon, she had had rather a light day's work thus far; and besides, she had no intention of expending any of her money at a tavern. She accordingly walked on an hour longer, by which time the firmament was pretty fully studded with stars. She began to feel hungry, too. She accordingly turned off from the road toward the door of a farm-house where she saw a bright light at the kitchen windows. She knocked at the door, and was told to come in.

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The farmer is very rough and stern.

His wife is more merciful.

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By the side of the capacious fire-place sat a middle-aged man, fatigued apparently by the labors of the day. His wife was just carrying away the cups and saucers from the table to a sort of little closet in the wall. Two children, a boy and a girl of about eight or nine years of age, the latter rather the youngest, were standing near the table. The outer door opened directly into this room, and when our traveler opened it, the whole group turned and looked toward her.

"Well, ma'am, what do you want here?" said the man.

"I want to find my boy—no, I want a little supper, and a little place to sleep. I am very tired; I've been walking all day."

There was something so wild and strange in her rapid and incoherent utterance, and in the whole expression of her countenance and figure, that the children involuntarily retreated, somewhat precipitately, and yet without absolutely running, to an open door which led to a back room; the boy, however, though the oldest, seemed the most frightened of the two. Their father interrupted the visitor roughly in the midst of her petition.

"No, no; go off—go off about your business; there's nothing here for you."

"But I haven't got any business," said she, coming in and shutting the door, "only to find my boy; he's a beautiful boy, only he don't mind me very well. But I can't find him to-night; but if you will give me some supper, and let me sleep here by your fire, I am going to find him to-morrow, and then we are going home. It's too cold for me to sleep out o' doors to-night."

"Be off—be off," said the farmer; "I tell you we've got nothing here for you."

"I would not send her off so, husband," said the farmer's wife, mildly. "Poor creature!"

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Little Julia takes compassion on her.

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"I don't want her about here ; let her go to the tavern," he replied.

"But probably she has not any money."

"Well, then, there are enough other houses along the road ; why need she come here ?"

"I can give her a little supper?" said the wife, in a tone of inquiry.

"Well," said the man, gruffly, "you may give her something to eat, if you've a mind to, and then she must be off."

"She might sleep here on the floor."

"No, I would not have her in the house on any account. Like as not she'd be up in the night and set the house on fire."

Here the little girl, who was apparently deeply interested in the dialogue, began to come forward timidly, the boy behind calling out in a loud whisper,

"Julia, Julia, don't go."

But Julia kept advancing, and at last came up to her father and said,

"Do, father, let her have some supper."

"She may have some supper, I say," said the father, "but as for sleeping here, I tell you it is out of the question entirely."

The farmer was perhaps right in his doubt of the safety of admitting a crazy straggler into his house for the night, but he might have been less ungracious in making known his refusal. In fact, he perceived at once that his visitor was insane, and supposed that she was paying no attention to what he was saying, as she continued talking to herself all the while, and was attending apparently only to her own soliloquy. But she was, in fact, cunningly noticing all that was said and done, though she did not reply to it. At length the farmer's wife gave her a seat at the table, and then brought some plain and coarse food and put before

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Julia comes to talk with the poor crazy woman.

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her. The farmer took down the Almanac from the shelf, and began to look in the calendar to see what sort of weather they were going to have the next week, and the room was still, except that the guest now and then paused from her meal to talk to herself in a rapid and incoherent tone, according to her accustomed manner.

While she was at her supper, Julia gradually drew near to her, listening attentively to her talk. The boy kept at a greater distance, evidently more afraid. Julia stood near, with her hands behind her, her eyes fastened upon the visitor, and her attention wholly absorbed in the soliloquy which she heard. She could not get much connected meaning from it, but hearing her allude often to her boy, she at length ventured to ask her where her boy was.

Old Molly looked up suddenly from her plate, held her knife and fork motionless in her hands, and fixed a wild, unearthly gaze upon Julia, which terrified her. She shrunk back instinctively a few steps, and waited for the old woman to speak.

"You dear little girl, what do you want with me?" said she.

"I only asked you where your boy is," Julia timidly said.

"My boy? oh yes, my boy! I don't know where he is."

"Has he gone away?" said Julia.

Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the mild, gentle, lovely, and yet timid expression which reposed upon the fair countenance of the little girl, and the stern, wild, savage, glassy stare into which the wrinkled countenance of the old woman was fixed. Julia was terrified, but yet she was held by a strong feeling of interest and compassion from retreating any farther.

"Yes, he's gone away. They've carried him away, and I am going after him. He was just about as big as you—

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Julia is called away.

A lodging in the barn.

The hay.

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no, as that boy out there. Come here, boy!" she added, fiercely, turning suddenly to Julia's brother.

The boy retreated to the back door.

"What's the matter with the boy? He is not my boy. My boy is just about as big. He *was* just about as big. And he made me some stepping-stones to go to the spring; because why, it was muddy. But it seems to me that was a good while ago. Let me see." And she leaned her head upon her hand, and seemed lost in thought.

Then suddenly turning to Julia, she said,

"Did you ever see my boy?"

"No," said Julia, shaking her head.

"Yes you have," she said, eagerly, "and you know where he is; tell me—tell me."

"Julia," called out the farmer from his corner, "come away, and let the old woman eat her supper in peace."

Julia came away, and the guest relapsed into a more quiet state, only giving utterance occasionally to her usual mutterings.

After she had finished her supper, the embarrassing question how the helpless traveler was to be disposed of for the night recurred. Even the farmer himself, rough and callous as he seemed to be, shrunk a little from turning her off upon the road again in the cold night air. At last, after some hesitation and delay, he concluded to give her permission to sleep in the barn, and taking a lantern down from its place in a corner, he lighted it, and called upon his guest to follow him.

The moon was just rising, and when they reached the loft in the barn which was to serve for the poor traveler's bed-chamber, its light shone in upon the floor and hay so as sufficiently to illuminate the scene. The lantern was useful, however, in guiding them up the dark and narrow staircase.

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Moonlight in the barn.The crazy woman's reveries in the night.

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"There," said the farmer, "you may sleep here. Cover yourself up well with hay, and mind and lay still all night, and not get up and go groping about, and break your neck down these stairs."

The traveler seemed satisfied with her accommodations. She arranged her bed and lay down near the open window, and was soon in a troubled sleep. She slept several hours. When she awoke it was a little past midnight. The moon shone in at the large opening which served for a window more broadly than before. Its brightness excited her. Its cold, chilly light gleamed upon her features, and harmonized exactly with their expression. She began talking to herself as before, rapidly, incoherently, in a shrill, slender voice, and with a wild eye dancing about upon the various objects brought to her view through the open window.

"Yes," she muttered, "that's a tall pine. I guess that would work up well. Amos would bring it down in ten minutes—only I don't know where he is. What's that? There's fire out there in the field. That's Amos's work; he's been a clearing. Now I shall find him. I'll go and see, or else I'll go and set his house on fire, as he said. That would be good—only I'd rather not burn up that little girl."

She started up and gazed out of the window. Beyond the house was a small field which had apparently been recently cleared. Blackened logs and stumps were scattered over it, and at one or two points a small and slender smoke was to be seen curling up slowly, and interwreathing itself with the mists of the evening. The maniac sat up and gazed at the field very intently. It reminded her of former days.

She began to feel a disposition to do mischief. The remembrance of the farmer's roughness and severity the even-

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M'Donner's mother forms a cunning scheme.

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ing before rankled in her memory, and she thought it would be pleasant to have some revenge. The feeling, however, which thus arose was not the deep malignity of homicidal mania; it was an appetite for petty mischief, half malice, half fun. Though the element of pleasure which it involved was cold and cheerless, it gleamed with a chilly brightness, like the light of the moonbeams upon her face, but it brought no smile. She rose at length, and said, "I'll give him a fright, at least."

She accordingly gathered up as large a tuft of hay as she could grasp in her arms, and carefully groping her way down the stairs, she went out to that side of the barn which was most remote from the house, and laid it down upon the ground not far from the building. She then turned off toward the newly-cleared field. She clambered over fences, and surmounted the various obstacles arising from the roughness and irregularity of the ground, until she reached at length the remains of the smouldering fires.

She remained here for a long time, forgetting apparently the object for which she came. She collected the brands, and the fragments of branches and of roots which she found lying about upon the ground, and replenished one of the fires, talking to herself, all the while, in her usual rapid and incoherent tone. Then she contrived to roll up a short log, and took her seat upon it, holding out her pallid and shriveled hands to receive the warm and genial radiations from the fire.

"There," she said, as she placed herself before it, "this is comfortable. A good fire is better than moonlight, after all. The moon used to be pleasant in old times, but of late years she is getting very chilly and cold."

A slight *rigor* passed over her frame, and she hovered up nearer to the fire. She sat gazing into the burning mass of brands and embers for some time, lost in deep thought.

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She proceeds to execute her plan.

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She builds a fire.

At length she raised her head, and after looking round a moment wildly, said,

"This isn't my husband's clearing—I knew it wasn't. I haven't seen my husband this long time. I wonder why he don't come home. Stop—let me think—he's dead. I believe he's dead—or else my boy is dead—or else he's gone away. One is dead and the other is gone, or else one is gone and the other is dead, and so they are both dead and gone. But I must go and kindle my fire."

She took up a large brand thoroughly burned through, and well ignited at one end, while the other end, which had been out of the reach of the fire, served for a handle. With this she walked back toward the farmer's dwelling. She happened to get into the cart-track which led to and from the field, and thus she succeeded in going along without much difficulty. She passed through a pair of bars which led to a spacious yard. There was a great wood-pile in the yard, and around it the ground was covered with chips and splinters which had been thrown out by the axe. The crazed incendiary paused and looked around. The temptation was very strong to collect a little heap of these combustibles under the kitchen window, "and smoke the crabbed old fellow," as she said, "out of his bed." But the thought of Julia deterred her, and she went on around behind the barn.

She placed her brand, which had ceased to emit any flame, down upon the ground, by the side of the little heap of hay, and then gathered the hay around and over it, and pressed it down. A slender, well-defined smoke soon began to curl slowly up through the mass, which increased continually, until presently she opened the heap a moment, and thus, admitting the air, the densest of the smoke gave way suddenly to a small blue flame. She then heaped the rest of the hay gently over the fire, and hastened round to



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*Molly gives an alarm of fire.**She then makes her escape.*

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the other side of the barn, and thence out to the front of the house. On looking back, the barn itself concealed the fire from her view, but she could see a faint but slowly increasing gleam of light shining upon the fields, and fences, and buildings on either side. She waited a few minutes. The light rapidly increased, and at last burst forth with great splendor, and at that instant she screamed out, with the full force of her shrill and piercing voice,

"Fire! fire! turn out—turn out; your barn is on fire!"

The noise of a brisk movement was heard in the house. A window was thrown up violently. Loud exclamations and outcries resounded within the dwelling. The author of the mischief did not, however, think it prudent to await the result. The moment the words of her alarm were uttered, she began to move on, with rapid and tottering steps, along the road. She walked on some distance, and then secreted herself in the shadow of a thicket by the roadside, and paused to watch the proceedings. She was, however, too distant to hear or see much. The light gradually faded away as the fire went down. The noise was less violent, but more extended. Persons seemed moving about the yards and buildings. The crazed traveler had cunning enough to know that they were probably looking for her, and that the wisest thing for her to do was to get well beyond reach of pursuit before the light of the morning.

She accordingly traveled on, hour after hour. She begged some breakfast at another farm-house, and then walked on till noon.

In this manner, and with a recurrence of somewhat similar adventures, the poor traveler wandered on for several days; and as her mind became gradually interested more and more in the various scenes and incidents which she met with on the way, she appeared to lose sight of the great object which she had in view in undertaking her

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Rudeness of the boys.

A village.

Crossing the bridge.

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journey. She talked less and less about "her boy," and more of other subjects which were brought casually to her mind. Sometimes rude boys gathered around her, near some school-house or by the roadside, and teased and tormented her in a thousand ways. This would irritate and excite her, and sometimes arouse her almost to phrenzy. Then she would become mischievous and abusive, and this excited the animosity of her persecutors still more, until she was driven out of the neighborhood with roughness or even violence. When she was kindly treated, she was more quiet and calm, and would soon become completely inoffensive and harmless, wandering on, subsisting by charity, and keeping up in her mind a vague remembrance of her object, the finding of her lost son.

One evening in November, after a mild and pleasant day, she came out of the woods upon the brow of a hill, or, rather, of a long descent which opened to her view a spacious valley. Through the centre of it flowed a quiet river, meandering among meadows varied by the different hues of grass-land and tillage. The harvests had been gathered in, and the leaves were falling, and yet, under the declining autumnal sun, the landscape had a warm and cheerful appearance. Nearly opposite to her was a village, on the other side of the river; and the road in which the woman was traveling, after winding down the descent between fields and farm-houses, was terminated by a small covered bridge, which led across the stream to the village beyond.

The crazed traveler pursued her way down the descent and crossed the bridge. She was stopped by the tollman upon the opposite side demanding her toll. She begged for a free passage, pleading poverty; and after some negotiation, in the course of which the tollman was sadly puzzled by the strange mixture of shrewdness and insanity which her conversation indicated, she was finally allowed

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The poor woman is not well received in the village.

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to pass without drawing upon her scanty funds. The village was very small, and the streets nearly deserted. She applied at several doors for supper and lodging, but was repeatedly repulsed. She had generally met with a different reception at the solitary farm-houses along the road. There was a sort of dramatic interest in the poor woman's insanity and distress for those whose minds were not occupied with other subjects of thought. A chance visitor, especially if the case is possessed of any strongly-marked peculiarities, is a source of pleasant excitement in a lonely region, and sparsely scattered districts are, in consequence, proverbially hospitable. And it is not wholly selfishness, either. The sentiment of pity for the distressed is more vivid and strong where the mind is less engrossed by more absorbing means of excitement.

In this village, however, the poor wanderer was very generally repulsed. Some shut the door against her rudely. Others advised her to go to the tavern. They were perhaps right, only they might have refused her request mildly. The roughest-looking beings are not always the most insensible to kindness or unkindness in the treatment they receive.

Poor Molly's funds were almost exhausted. She had been very frugal, and had never bought when begging was possible. But it was not always possible, and her little store had gradually disappeared, until only one small piece of money remained.

After trying in vain to get some shed or barn to crawl into, she was compelled to go to the tavern. The innkeeper told her to "go off about her business." She produced her money, and said she could pay for a lodging. After some conversation, in which her insanity became very apparent, the tavern-keeper concluded to let her lodge in an empty stall in his stable, upon the straw. She made this her lodging-place for several weeks.

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Molly's insanity becomes more violent than ever.

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In fact, the winter passed away while she continued in possession of this rude home. She made occasional excursions away from it, but generally returned again after a short absence. It was a quiet and peaceful village, and she found less to molest and irritate her there than she had had to encounter in most other places. The inhabitants, finding her harmless and comparatively unobtrusive, became gradually accustomed to admitting her to their kitchens, to warm herself when she was cold; they fed her when she was hungry, and gave her articles of worn-out clothing. In a word, she became, for some months, quite domesticated here, though her benefactors could never learn from her any thing of her history. She could tell nothing of her former residence, nor even her own name, except that she said they called her Molly. She often talked incoherently of her boy, but she contradicted herself so completely in respect to his age, and other circumstances, that people supposed the idea was wholly a delusion.

As February came on, her insanity seemed to be gradually returning again in a more violent manner. She was more absent-minded and dejected. The boys teased her more than usual, but whether this was the cause or the effect of the aggravated symptoms which appeared was not certain. She began to be mischievous in a small way. The tavern-keeper threatened her. This seemed to make her worse. She grew turbulent and noisy, and went, late at night, singing about the street. At last they threatened to shut her up if she did not conduct more properly. There was no improvement; and the threat was carried into execution.

One day, a young man from the village was walking along the road toward the store, when his attention was arrested by hearing the sound of a female voice singing in a low and mournful tone. It proceeded from an old, di-

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They confine Molly in a hovel with a chain.

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lapidated building by the roadside. It had once been a farm-house containing two rooms. The roof of one had fallen in; the other apartment still preserved its form in some measure, though the door was half off, hanging by one hinge; the windows were broken, and the floor had settled in various places entirely out of its level. The young man went up to the window and looked in. There was a little fire burning upon the old hearth, the brands resting upon stones, which had long lain there—a sort of andirons not worth removing with the other furniture when the house had been abandoned. Near the back side of the room, upon a little straw spread down upon the floor, sat poor Molly. A moderate-sized iron chain was passed round her ankle, and secured by a rusty padlock, the other end of the chain being fastened to one of the studs of the frame of the house, which had been laid bare for this purpose by breaking away the plastering before it. The maniac had a small stone in her hand, with which she was steadily and perseveringly knocking upon the chain at the place where it clasped her ankle, singing, or rather chanting, in a low, mournful tone, to herself, as if to beguile the time.

She noticed the arrival of her visitor by the darkening of the window occasioned by his coming up to it. She looked up, but continued striking her chain regularly as before.

“Oh, walk in, walk in,” said she. “I am glad you have come to see me, though I am going away pretty soon—as soon as I have knocked off this chain. They put this chain on my ankle, and I am knocking it off, and then I am going away to find my boy.”

She then dropped her stone as if a new thought had suddenly struck her, and reaching round behind her, took up an old snuff-box without a cover, and begged her visitor

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Her cunning schemes to get money.Notching the time.

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to give her a cent to buy her some snuff. She said her snuff-box was out, and she must have some more, and she turned the box bottom upward, and struck it upon the floor, and then held it up to her visitor, by way of convincing him how utterly empty it was.

"Why, you can't go to buy any snuff, if I give you the money," said he. "Better let me take the box, and go and buy you some at the store."

But she insisted upon having the money. She said she should get the chain off very soon, and she had rather go and buy the snuff herself. She begged for it so piteously that her visitor could not refuse. He tossed the piece of money to her. She caught it up eagerly, and he went on his way.

An hour after she repeated the process with another chance visitor, and afterward again and again during the day, each time showing her empty box, and concealing her money. About the middle of the afternoon she had quite a supply of small coin.

The sound of her voice, and the clinking produced by her blows upon the chain, attracted many persons to her window; among others, several groups of boys and girls stopped to talk with her on their way from school. She waited for some time, until at last two young and innocent-looking children came along, hand in hand.

She took up two pieces of broken lath, which had been thrown down upon the floor from the walls of the house, and as soon as the children came to the window, she began notching one with the other.

"Well, Aunt Molly," said the boy, "and what are you doing now?"

"Oh, I'm trying to notch the time," said she, "but I don't get along very well." And she laid down the two sticks with a deep sigh.

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Molly wants to buy a file to notch the time.

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"What are you notching the time for?" said the boy.

"Oh, that's the way. I've heard 'em tell of prisoners notching the time on a stick; but I can't do it very well. If somebody would only just go and buy me a file——"

"I would," said the boy, "but I have not got any money."

"Bless you, dear," said Molly, "I have got money enough. You come in and get it, and then just run over to the store, and buy me a file, and then I can notch the days very easily."

The children had no suspicion of the real use to which the cunning maniac wished to appropriate the tool, for she had the sagacity to hide her chain under and behind her; and though they had known that she was chained, yet, as they did not now see the iron, there was nothing to remind them of it.

"Let's go for her," said the boy. They went into the



THE MANIAC.

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She succeeds.

Her exultation and joy.

She makes her escape.

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house, received the money from her shriveled hand, and then proceeded to the store, under a special charge from their principal not to tell who the file was for.

The store-keeper, fortunately for Molly, was engaged talking with various customers when the children came in. He took down a small bundle of three-cornered files, and handed them one, sweeping their money from the counter into the drawer, and talking all the time with his other customers. They carried their purchase to the prisoner. She thanked them for it over and over again, and immediately began notching her stick. As soon as the children had gone, however, she secreted her file in the straw, and made a great effort to restrain her almost irresistible desire to shout and sing.

They brought her some plain supper about dark, put another log of wood into the fire-place, and gave her an old blanket to cover herself up with for the night. As soon as they were gone, she began to file upon one of the links of her chain. She kept her ear open for every noise in the street, so as to be ready to suspend her work upon the slightest alarm. But there was no alarm. She proceeded uninterruptedly for several hours, and at length made an opening in one of the links sufficient to allow the other to be slipped out, and she was free. She stuck the file up by its point in the middle of the floor as a sort of symbol of triumph and defiance to her persecutors, and then sallied forth into the cold night air.

It was the last of February, and one of those "great blocking snow-storms," as the settlers call them, by which that month is characterized, was coming on. The sky was entirely overcast, and the snow was beginning to fall in fine flakes, driven moderately from the northeast by a gentle wind. The air was mild, and if the weather had continued as it was then, the night would have been as comfortable



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Molly wanders away in a snow-storm.She becomes exhausted.

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for a pedestrian as any in the year. Besides, the poor maniac thought of no trouble now that she was once more free. She took the most solitary road, thinking that in that she should be most secure from pursuit, and she wandered on, dragging the few links of her chain which still remained attached to her ankle along the snow.

It was nearly midnight. Molly walked pretty fast, and at three o'clock she had penetrated many miles into the forest by a wild and unfrequented road. The snow, however, continually increased in depth, and the poor traveler's strength gradually failed. There were many reasons for it. Her powers were sinking under the reaction that naturally followed the period of strong excitement which she had passed through. Then the chain, although it was not very heavy, wore upon her strength. The first half hour she did not feel it much, but going on hour after hour, and especially when the snow began to be several inches deep, it very seriously impeded her way. It irritated and vexed her mind too, and thus accelerated her exhaustion. Then the snow itself was a continually increasing impediment. It was dry and slippery, and walking through it soon became laborious in the extreme.

It may have been, too, that her disease had run its course, and that now, if she had been sheltered and protected in her own home, her hour would have come. At any rate, she began to feel a sinking and an exhaustion which she had not felt before. "*I can not go any farther,*" she said, and sank down under the lee of a great root turned up by the fall of a tree, with an overwhelming sense of exhaustion and despair.

The cutting wind whistled through her slender clothing, and the snow beat with a tingling sensation against her cheek. She remained here motionless a few moments, saying to herself that she would toil on no longer, but would

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*She arrives at last at M'Donner's shanty.*

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lie there and die, when suddenly the idea of her lost boy once more flashed upon her mind. She rose hastily, muttering, "No, I will not give up yet. I will just go and find my boy, and then I shall die in peace."

As she rose and looked around, she saw an opening in the woods, which looked like a road leading off from the main track. She thought it must be a by-road leading to a house. "I will go there, and just get them to let me warm myself a little," said she, "and then I can go on very well." She accordingly turned aside into this new path, and waded laboriously along through the snow.

The revival of her strength and resolution was only a temporary one, and she soon found herself again overcome by an irresistible sense of exhaustion and fatigue. But just as she was about giving over a second time, she perceived, through the falling snow before her, the dim outline of a house, or hut, or cabin of some sort, by the side of the way. It furnished one more last stimulus to arouse her to action. She pressed forward toward it, under a vague hope of finding warmth and shelter there. As she approached it, it dwindled to a poor, hut, dark and gloomy. The door was open. She pushed in, and sank down almost fainting upon the chips and shavings that covered the floor. She was in M'Donner's shanty.

It was not very cold, and the exhausted traveler was now in no immediate danger of freezing. She was sheltered from the wind, and the atmosphere of the room felt upon her cheek as if it had been partially warmed by a fire. She laid herself down in a corner, and soon fell into a troubled sleep. For the first half hour, she occasionally shuddered and shivered, and again and again attempted to draw her feet up closer, and to cover them with her scanty dress. Afterward she slept more quietly. Her nervous system was

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M'Donner is thunderstruck at finding his mother.

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losing its sensibility, and the powers of life were fast ebbing away.

This state of things continued until the sun had risen, and the hour arrived when M'Donner sallied forth from his home to force his way through the snow to his lonely workshop. His mind was in a state of tender melancholy. He walked along as if in the presence of God; and he had a faint hope of forgiveness—strong enough to produce a feeling of happy peace of mind, and yet too weak to awaken self-confidence or elation of spirits. He entered his cabin, expecting a day of real, though sad and sorrowful enjoyment; but his feelings were destined to undergo a dreadful shock, and a total change in their character, at the sight which awaited him there.

The first glance startled him. The second revealed to him the form and features of his mother. He fell in an instant before her, upon his knees, and put his hand gently upon her cheek to see whether it was warm or cold. Though terribly shocked, he uttered no exclamation. The first feeling of horror which her deathlike countenance had awakened was relieved a little by finding that life had not yet relinquished its hold. He took off his dreadnought and spread it gently over her, and then his coat to cover her feet. Then, as gently and silently as possible, he struck a light, and kindled a blazing fire in the corner which served for a fire-place. He opened the little package of food which he had brought for his dinner, in order to select something to warm for her. He poured out some milk from his bottle into a little tin dipper, and set it before the fire. After these arrangements were made, he turned around to look at his mother again, to see if she was sleeping quietly. Her eyes were wide open, and fixed with a bewildered but earnest gaze upon him.

"Mother," said he, taking up his dipper and kneeling

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He builds a fire.He gives her some milk.

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down before her with it in his hand, "my dear mother, here is a little milk for you."

She kept her eyes fixed upon him with a wild stare, which was almost terrifying. Her son put his arm under her head to raise it, and held the dipper to her lips. She pressed her hand upon his wrist to keep the dipper off, and still gazed at him.

"Mother," said M'Donner, in a subdued and gentle voice, "this is Amos—don't you know Amos? Here is some milk for you, mother; take a little milk."

She permitted the milk to be put to her lips, and drank of it freely, stopping once or twice to gaze at her son.

"Amos!" said she, feebly; "yes, I knew I could find you, Amos," gazing at him again intently, as she laid her head back again upon the shavings; "no, you are not Amos; you are a man."

She shut her eyes, and remained a few minutes silent and motionless. Presently she opened them again; they had a calmer and more peaceful expression. Her recollection was gradually returning. Either the sudden shock which her mind had received at the sight of her long-lost son, or else that mysterious influence under which the reason is so often restored during the half hour that precedes dissolution, threw, for a few moments, her disordered intellect into right and healthy action.

"Amos," said she, "is that you? Where am I? Oh, what a terrible dream I have had!"

"Never mind it, mother," said her son; "you are safe here at last, and I will take care of you now."

"What did you go away from me for, Amos?" said she, mournfully.

The man of iron turned his head away; his eyes filled with tears. "Oh, my mother," said he, "what an ungrateful, undutiful son I have been!"

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M'Donner's anguish and remorse.He prays for his mother.

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"Oh no, Amos," said she, "you have not been ungrateful; you have always been a kind, good boy. Don't be troubled about it; that makes me feel worse than all the rest."

Amos sat in silence before her, gently rubbing her forehead and cheek with his hard and callous hand.

After a few minutes' silence, she said again, her eyes fixed steadily upon her son,

"Amos, my boy—where are you, Amos?"

"Here I am, mother," said he, "here," looking her full in the face. "Don't you see me, mother?"

"No," she answered, feebly, "I can't see you. I can't see any thing. But be a good boy, Amos, and always say your prayers, and I shall see you again some day or other, I know."

Amos brought his hand down from her forehead so as to close her eyes. He could not bear their fixed and glassy expression.

"Go to sleep now, mother, a little while. You had better go to sleep, and then you will feel better."

Her eyes remained closed, and her respiration continued regular, like that of a person in a natural sleep. Amos sat breathless by the fire, watching her.

"My God," he said to himself, with the most imploring looks and gestures, but suppressing every audible sound, "O my God, spare *her* life, or take away mine. I have murdered her," he added, looking at the deathlike expression of her face. "How could she track me so certainly through all my wanderings? Nobody but a mother could have found me here. What a son I have been!"

Then, after a pause, during which the breathing of the patient continued regular, the hope dawned upon his mind that she might yet be saved. The desire that her life might be spared became intense. He could not endure the

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He watches by her.

She falls asleep.

She is dead!

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thought that the worldly account between mother and son should be closed so, with nothing upon the record but undutifulness, ingratitude, disobedience, and neglect on his side, and love—patient, persevering, untiring love, on hers. Her having thus encountered the very extreme of exposure and misery to seek him was the last seal of her affection, and the most overwhelming reproof to him. He longed to have her live, even if it was only to linger in pain and suffering for a few days, that he might soothe his own anguish by showing her proofs of kindness and affection.

His agitating thoughts were interrupted by a movement at the couch of the patient. He was at her side in an instant. It was, however, only a sigh and a slight change of position. The audible breathing, however, ceased, and the anxious son's hopes were revived on perceiving that the sleeper was more quiet than before.

"She rests," he said. "She will awake better. Thank God! she will be saved."

He crept softly back to the fire, and began to prepare more food for her, to be ready when she should again open her eyes.

He waited half an hour, and the sleeper's rest continued undisturbed. "She sleeps very quietly," he said to himself at length, looking toward her; "too quietly. I wish I could hear her breathe a little. It would not seem so lonely." He crept softly to her side. He listened attentively. He put his ear close to her face. He laid his hand upon her cheek. She was dead. She had been dead for half an hour.

The effect of this tragical scene upon M'Donner's mind was to overwhelm him with remorse and despair. It attracted, too, general attention among the scattered population of the forest, and it caused a scrutinizing eye to be

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M'Donner is arrested and sent to prison.

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fixed upon him. The extraordinary circumstances of such a death, the mystery which seemed to hang over M'Donner's own history, his unwillingness to give any account of himself, and frequent expressions which he used, vague and ambiguous, but dark and despairing, which seemed to allude to some deep guilt of his own, all combined to make him an object of distrust and suspicion. One discovery led to another, until at length he was identified as the fugitive counterfeiter. He was arrested, tried, and condemned; and thus, not many weeks after his mother's death, he was clothed in the party-colored dress, and conducted by two armed officers to his cell in the State Penitentiary.

The time during which he was confined in the county jail, awaiting his trial, was spent at first in a state of tormenting remorse, which at length seemed to relapse into gloomy and stupid despair. The criminal charge, however, against him, which was pending, had very little influence in producing his mental sufferings. Crime seemed to him only one of the outward, accidental *symptoms* of the deep-rooted disease which had raged within him from his earliest years, and which had corrupted his whole soul. Even the death of his mother, painful as it had been at the time, did not dwell upon his mind. It was the occasion only—the instrument of bringing to life and vigor the thousand scorpions which a long life of depravity and sin had been generating within him. He sat upon the iron rail of his narrow bedstead, his feet hanging down to the floor, and his arms folded upon his knees, with hair and beard long and disheveled, and countenance hollow and haggard, brooding, hour after hour, over scenes and incidents long gone by. Sin was disrobed. It had now no longer its gaudy and illusive dress. He experienced its nature and its tendencies. The law of God appeared clear, and bright, and distinct before him. He had understood

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His eyes are opened.He sees his true condition.

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its leading features and principles before, and regarded them as splendid but impracticable theory. Now he perceived and felt its excellence and beauty, and was pressed to the earth with the sense of its imperious obligation. He formed a clear conception of the kind of life and character which would be produced by sincere personal affection for God, and real, honest kindness and good-will to man, and he saw clearly that between this character and his own there had been, all his life, a total and uninterrupted opposition and contrariety. He had never, for a single moment, been in a state of submission to his Maker's government, but always, from the beginning, in all employments, in all places, a rebel and an enemy. The change in his feelings at his mother's death-bed helped him to understand this. He perceived that there he had experienced emotions of gratitude and filial affection not merely greater in degree, but they seemed to him totally different in kind from any thing he had ever experienced before. He was probably mistaken in this, for though he had, in general, been undutiful and disobedient as a son, he had sometimes felt for his mother sentiments of sincere affection. But the overwhelming emotions of filial tenderness which he felt for her when he found that she was really dying, helped him to acquire a distinct idea of the nature and strength of the tie which ought to have bound him to God, and it enabled him to see that he had been utterly and entirely destitute of it all his days. In a word, he perceived that in respect to the law of God he was in a condition exactly analogous to that in which he stood before the laws of his country—a criminal, guilty and defenseless, and overwhelmed with the horrors which always fill up the dismal interval between detection and punishment.

Besides the stings of remorse, there were most bitter reflections arising from the consideration of the utter reme-



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M'Donner's bitter reflections.They overwhelm him with despair.

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dilessness of the evils which had resulted from his life of sin. "There is the time of my childhood and youth," said he to himself, "all gone—gone forever; it *never* can return. I may exist for ages, but I *never can* see childhood again. Its bright mornings, its peace, its innocence, its happiness, gone forever. Oh! the days when I played around my mother's door, when she was young, and strong, and well, and could have enjoyed my kindness and care, if I had shown her any, they can not return. My mother! I can never be her son again. I can not take back the cruel words I have spoken, the pangs I have caused her, the neglect, the misery. Oh, if I could only begin life over again! But no, I have had my trial; I have loaded myself with guilt, and now I have nothing to do but to bear the burden—forever."

The idea of being forgiven, and again restored to peace and happiness, seemed utterly impossible in the very nature of things. It seemed to him that horror and despair must necessarily be his portion, and that the necessity of it arose out of something inherent in the very nature of his own moral being, independently of any infliction of pain by the being whom he had offended. It seemed to him that even if God should be willing to forgive him, he could never forgive himself, but must necessarily, from the very nature of guilt, bear about with him forever the burden of his sins.

When a sinner comes to such a state of mind as this, in which the *idea* of moral excellence, which the law of God delineates, comes home to the mind, and reveals by its bright light the dark depths of depravity, enmity, and sin which have for the whole of life had such complete possession of the soul—in a word, when the soul, having ceased to judge of itself according to human appearances, and by the standard of human opinion, finds itself in the

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He recalls to mind the texts which Herman had taught him.

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presence of God, and brings itself to trial fairly there, there is no peace for it, and no refuge, except in some ideas of expiation. There is a moral impulse which demands suffering for sin, and the guilty, really feeling their guilt, will not *let themselves go free*. The soul holds itself, as it were, under the lash—becomes its own executioner, and, coerced by an instinct even stronger than its horror of suffering, administers the deserved penalty to itself, and sternly interdicts all hope of future deliverance. In such a state of mind, how many have sunk to despair and suicide!

But M'Donner was not to be left to destruction. The floods of remorse and anguish which the peculiar circumstances of his mother's death brought over his soul, entirely overwhelmed for a time the faint idea he had formed of an atoning sacrifice for sin, and the hope of pardon which he had begun to cherish. These feelings, however, began at length to revive. Herman, anticipating the conflicts and struggles to which he knew well that such a spirit must be exposed, had selected and marked a number of the more important and striking passages of Scripture relating to salvation through Christ, and persuaded M'Donner to commit them to memory. His object in this was twofold: he wished to furnish him, at the time, with a salutary employment, as a means of occupying his thoughts, and keeping him from melancholy and despair; and then, besides, he anticipated periods when such passages, if stored in the mind, would come up spontaneously to view, and afford solace and strength when there was no other solace or comfort near. It was sound philosophy. The hour which Herman had anticipated came; and after several days of uninterrupted suffering, the storm in the poor sinner's soul lulled a little, and the passages he had learned came up for a hearing.

"I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. And

The texts.

They soothe and quiet his mind.

The hymn.

the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith on the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

"Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died."

"Not for me, no, not for me," said the despairing sinner, as these passages came to his mind. "I have been too great a sinner ever to hope for forgiveness."

And then again he would involuntarily add,

"Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the working of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Though he refused to receive any substantial comfort from these passages, he yet repeated them with a sort of melancholy satisfaction. They quieted and soothed his spirit. There were some very common hymns, too, which at first came involuntarily to his mind, but which at length he began to repeat audibly, walking back and forth across his cell. There was one which at length he made his own. It seemed as if it had been written expressly for his very case, in that cell, and at that particular time. He repeated it over and over again. He made it his prayer: it re-established the communication between his despairing soul and God.

"O thou that hear'st the prayer of faith,

Wilt thou not save a soul from death,

That casts itself on thee?

I have no refuge of my own,

But fly to what my Lord hath done

And suffered once for me.

Slain in the guilty sinner's stead,

His spotless righteousness I plead,

And his availing blood;

That righteousness my robe shall be,

That merit shall atone for me,

And bring me back to God."

When the time of his trial came on he pleaded guilty,

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He thinks it impossible that he should ever be innocent again.

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and said nothing in mitigation of his sentence. In fact, he desired to be condemned. He felt a sort of satisfaction in hearing the sentence pronounced, and when the two officers conducted him to his cell, closed the ponderous iron door upon him, and turned the heavy bolt into its place, he experienced almost a sensation of relief. The burden of responsibility to human law, at least, was lightened. That was, indeed, but a small part of the account, but there was a feeling of satisfaction in having even that part settled. The whole question now was between him and God; and though he never could expect to expiate, himself, his sins against the government on high, he felt that there was another expiation provided, and therefore there was opened before him a glimpse of the possibility that he might, after all, yet get free from the awful responsibilities of guilt which he had incurred, and once more be innocent. "Innocent!" said he to himself, as his pulse beat high with the thought. "Is it possible that guilt can really be washed away? that, after once being guilty, a human soul can ever be really *innocent* again? Is it possible that, after all, I may yet be *justified*?"

Herman had explained to him what "*justified*," in the New Testament sense, means.

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A young traveler.He is coming out of a wood.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## FERGUS AGAIN.

AFTER the events described in the last chapter, some years glided away, and at length, upon a mild and pleasant autumnal day, a young pedestrian appeared emerging from a wood on a solitary road, which skirted the shore of a small lake surrounded by forests. The traveler was a very young man—of eighteen or twenty years of age, perhaps—plainly dressed, and having the air of a farmer's boy, yet there was something refined and intellectual in the cast of his countenance. He had a small bundle in one hand, and in the other a walking-cane, which he had cut that morning from the thicket.

As he emerged from the wood, he paused a moment to look at the beautiful prospect which there opened before him. He looked down upon a glen among the mountains, opening toward the lake, which reflected from its glassy surface the evening sky, and clouds gilded by the setting sun. Through the bottom of the glen flowed a stream, broad and deep, and emptying, by a large estuary of deep, still water, into the pond. Fields of rich intervale extended along the banks of the stream, rising into broad swells of upland at a little distance. The land in the valley was cleared, and divided into fields which had chiefly been harvested; the remaining vegetation exhibited the brown and sober hues of autumn. This sequestered valley was hemmed in by an amphitheatre of hills and mountains, which

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The traveler is fatigued, and sits down to rest.

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were covered with forests, richly colored in their foliage by the autumnal frosts. A snug but very comfortable-looking farm-house, built of logs, but evidently constructed in a capacious and substantial manner, was sleeping on the opposite side of the valley, upon a little rising ground, with a portion of the forest swelling behind it and above it to the north and east, giving it a peculiar expression of shelter and protection. It was, in fact, the home which Mc'Donner had begun to create for himself, where he was to be a "*new man*." He had already been established here three or four years since his liberation, and he was now, as the traveler approached, seated upon a broad stone step before the door.

The traveler stopped a moment to survey the scene before him. He was fatigued; he sat down upon a large smooth stone by the roadside to rest.

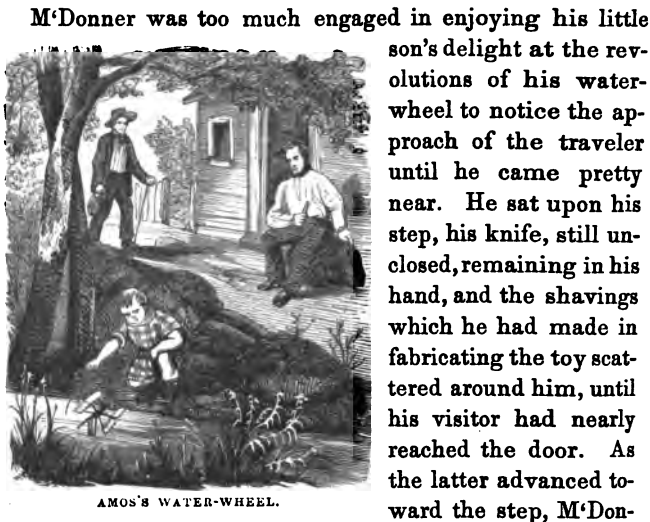
"I shall not see old Hoaryhead *this* week," said he, "I am afraid, after all; but if I can get into such a snug little harbor as this seems to be, I shall do very well for one night, at any rate—if mother would only be easy."

As he said, or rather thought this, his eye fell upon a moving figure upon the grass not far from the house. It was a child, playing near a little rivulet which came down from the hills, and emptied itself into the large brook which has already been spoken of. On looking more attentively, he perceived a little water-wheel spinning around in the bed of the brook. Its paddles, made of white pine, were bright, and reflected the rays of the sun.

"He could not have made it," said the traveler to himself, as he noticed that the child could not be more than two or three years of age. "His father did it for him, I suppose;" and from this indication of the kindness of the farmer's disposition, he augured favorably in respect to his own reception as guest for the night. He slowly rose from his seat, and began to walk down the hill.

The little water-wheel.

M'Donner invites the traveler in.



AMOS'S WATER-WHEEL.

ner looked up, and immediately rose, saying,

"Good evening, sir."

As he said it, his countenance wore an expression of interest and pleasure, which at once assured the timid youth that he was sure of being hospitably received.

"You seem to be traveling," added M'Donner.

"Yes, sir, and I am rather tired and hungry."

"Well, walk in, walk in; we'll cure you of both distempers before morning." The young man seated himself upon a high-backed chair which stood just within the door, and M'Donner himself resumed his seat near the threshold. They talked together a few minutes in respect to the distance the former had traveled, and the news of the road which he had brought.

"And when do you expect to reach Old Hoaryhead?" said M'Donner.

"I hoped to get there Saturday night," he replied; "but

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The stranger proves to be Fergus.

His history.

His character.

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how did you know any thing about my going toward Hoary-head?"

"Oh, I knew; I have seen you before."

"Me?" inquired the youth.

"Yes; your name is Fergus, I believe."

"Yes, sir; but where did you ever see me?"

"Oh, I have seen you a good many times, and am very glad to see you again, particularly here."

Fergus's wonder was excited for a few minutes, but he did not like to press his inquiries. He had no recollection of M'Donner, though he had often seen him in his boyish days. He had now, for several years, been away from home, employed in a large country town, fifty or sixty miles from his father's house, as a junior clerk in a store. He was going home to visit his father and mother. He was the same docile, kind-hearted, dutiful boy that he had ever been. The best moral principles had been inculcated by his parents, and had taken deep root, and they controlled his general character and deportment in such a manner as to afford great promise for the future. He was, in fact, growing up his parents' pride and joy.

Beneath all this fair exterior, however, there was in the heart a secret, but still a clear and decided alienation from God—using the word alienation, however, in a very mild sense. A strange but powerful feeling of repugnance made him shun his Maker's presence. The little prayers which his mother had taught him in infancy, to be repeated morning and evening, he had gradually ceased to use. And they were repeated merely mechanically, and as a form, for a long time before he gave them up altogether. He did not deliberately intend to abandon a practice so salutary, but the idea of drawing near to God was, somehow or other, not agreeable; and between the urgency of conscience and the force of habit on one side, and the constant pressure of



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Fergus had become confirmed in his ungodliness.

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aversion on the other, the practice gradually gave way, and left him at last without even the empty form of communion with his Maker. How many young persons of eighteen can say that this story is theirs!

When Fergus removed to his new sphere of duty in the village store, his position in respect to intercourse with God remained the same, and he gradually learned to justify and defend it. Before, he not only always had an instinctive feeling that he was wrong, but would always have admitted his guilt and danger if the subject had been brought up by a religious friend. But the ungodliness—we mean by this, not the wickedness, but simply the living without God—the ungodliness of cities and towns, in fact, of all cultivated and intellectual communities, is always better defended than that of the solitary farm-houses and secluded hamlets of the country. There are certain phrases and modes of expression current among those who live in sin, which, while they do not really justify impenitence even to the sinner's own conscience, at least give him something to say. He is not left speechless. He becomes, accordingly, somewhat fortified in his position. And yet it is not a real feeling of safety and protection, after all. He is secretly aware that his works are no defense. But still he takes refuge in them, as a man feels safer in his house than in the fields during a thunder-storm, though he is all the time well aware that the combustible roof above him is no protection.

However, Fergus had begun to familiarize himself a little with the weapons of defense, such as they are, with which irreligious men attempt to justify their neglect of the means of salvation. They did not really satisfy him, but they had an effect to fix and confirm him in impenitence, and to render him inaccessible to sentiments of religious truth and duty.

Evening at M'Donner's.

Evening devotions.

Amos.

After a time M'Donner called his boy away from his mill, and they all went together into the house. The guest was ushered into a capacious room, which served the double purpose of kitchen and parlor. They found there the wife, busy before the great stone fire-place, preparing supper. An infant was sleeping in a rude cradle in the middle of the room. The woman was obviously gratified at the appearance of a visitor. Nor was it simply a feeling of benevolence which caused the gratification; even Abraham's hospitality was probably heightened by his solitude. At any rate, the appearance of a guest was an incident highly welcome in this secluded valley.

They made a long evening of it in social and animated conversation. M'Donner told endless stories of being lost in the woods, "*treed*" by bears, blocked up by snow-storms, and other such forest adventures, involving as much of danger and of dramatic interest as can be furnished by a country in which there is scarcely any thing but the elements to fear. Fergus enjoyed his evening highly. There was something in the farmer's plain manners, his frank and cordial address, his hearty laugh, and in the quiet enjoyment with which his wife seemed to listen to the talk, that gave the whole scene a great charm for him. He sat upon a large "settle" by the side of the fire-place, holding the boy in his lap, who listened with breathless attention to all that was said. At length the great Bible was taken down; M'Donner took his little son in his lap, and sat up to the table before it. As he read, the boy looked on with the most fixed attention, while the father held the child's little plump and flexible finger at the place, moving its extremity from word to word along the line, to follow the reading.

"I always let Amos read a little himself when I have done," said M'Donner, as he finished the passage. And

then he pronounced distinctly the words of a verse, one after another, Amos repeating them after him, still keeping the place with his finger. When this was done, they rose to prayers, M'Donner leading the devotions. Fergus assumed the attitude and air of reverence, but employed his mind during the exercise in balancing the comparative advantages of having a farm in a quiet, picturesque spot like this, and "keeping a store."

Just before bedtime, Fergus went out with M'Donner to help him take care of his stock for the night; and as they were opening the little side door in the great barn, they observed distant flashes of lightning in the western horizon.

"We are going to have a shower, I believe," said Fergus, walking in.

"Perhaps so," replied M'Donner.

"I hope it won't rain to-morrow," added the young traveler.

"Oh, give yourself no concern about the weather, my boy," said M'Donner. "We must take what comes—from the sky."

"But I want to get home Saturday night, very much."

"I suppose your father expects you then," said the farmer, as he pitched down a fork full of hay to the oxen.

"I should be sorry to have him disappointed, for he is an excellent man; but I believe he has learned to hold all his expectations and plans in this world very loosely. That is the true philosophy. We must do what we can; what we can't do isn't to be done, and we may as well be quiet as unquiet about it."

"That is hard philosophy to practice," said Fergus.

"Hard! no, indeed, it is the very easiest. That's the recommendation of it. It is the other way that's hard. I've tried them both."

Fergus thought that, at any rate, it would be hard for

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Violent thunder-storm in the night.Fergus's alarm.

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him, but he did not say so. They returned in a few minutes into the house, and in a short time afterward Fergus was falling into a delicious sleep upon his hard bed in the loft, under the roof of the rude log dwelling.

There was a small square opening for a window in the pediment end of the building, to light this attic; but this window, which was over Fergus's bed, he had closed, partly to shut out the rain, and still more to exclude the flashes of lightning. A large portion of mankind are more or less uneasy in a thunder-storm, but lightning seems to have a peculiar terror for those whose consciences are not at ease in respect to their relations to God. That bright glitter, and the tremendous peal which follows, seems to come directly from Him whom they are offending. To the unquiet mind it has all the character of threatening. Even the backsliding Christian is overawed, and his secret sins, his neglected duties, his coldness and worldliness of spirit, all rise to his mind, and give the thunder a voice of remonstrance and warning.

Fergus was awakened by a loud peal, and for two hours he was kept in a state of great uneasiness. He suffered—though not, indeed, in a very severe degree—that bitterest of all the compounds of human emotion, the combination of remorse and fear. The lightning gleamed incessantly in the crevices between the logs and under the eaves of the dwelling. There was one continued peal of thunder, rolling incessantly over every part of the sky, and varied only by the loud, rattling volleys which seemed to burst out, now and then, directly over his head, as if some great monster was hovering over him for his destruction.

Fergus remembered his infantile prayers. He was half inclined to repeat one of them now; and yet he felt a strange repugnance to doing it. It might be shame; it might be pride—an unwillingness to be conquered by fear

Morning comes.

Great rain.

Freshest in the streams.

—it might be a doubt whether, if he should come to God, driven thus reluctantly by the influence of terror, and force himself to beg for his life, while his affections were all in a state of fixed aversion, it would be more than mockery.

The words "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh," presented themselves to his mind. He did not remember exactly the whole of the passage, but he had a vague feeling that the words came in connection with the charge of refusing the calls of God for a long time when he had called in kindness. At any rate, for some reason or other, he felt that he could not pray. His thoughts, however, soon became indistinct, as the storm without gradually lulled; and, in fact, the next thing that he was conscious of was being awakened by a noise below. He looked up. A steady white light appeared at the crevices which before had glittered with the lightning. It was morning. His heart bounded with a sensation of relief in thinking that the night, with all its darkness and storm, had gone, and he was once more at ease and in safety. He arose and dressed himself. He might now have drawn near to God, and asked for his favor and protection, without feeling the objection which had embarrassed him in the night; but the thought of doing so, somehow or other, did not occur to him. He arose and dressed himself, thinking of nothing but the weather.

The rain was descending steadily and copiously upon the roof over his head. He opened the shutter. The air was filled with the descending drops; the trees dripped with water; the ground seemed deluged; streams were flowing in all directions, and broad shallow pools spotted the low grounds along the river. The little brook, where Amos had set his water-wheel, had become a torrent, and all his works were completely submerged or washed away. Fergus saw at once that he was imprisoned.

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The roads impassable.Plan of going to Fell's Point by water.

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Fergus spent the forenoon with M'Donner, husking corn on the great barn floor. About noon the rain ceased, the clouds broke away, the sun came out, and at dinner Fergus began to talk of resuming his journey in the afternoon.

"Oh, it would be impossible to get along," said M'Donner; "the brook will not be down under twenty-four hours, at least."

"The brook?" said Fergus.

"Yes, the great brook; the road goes over it three or four times in the course of a dozen miles, and you can not possibly cross until the water is down."

"Ain't there any bridges?" asked Fergus.

"No," replied M'Donner; "we had two at the worst crossings, but they were carried away last spring. No, you must stay here until to-morrow, unless, indeed, I paddle you to Fell's Point."

"Where is Fell's Point?" asked Fergus.

"Four or five miles from here by water, and there you would find a good road. Now, as you and I have done a pretty good day's work this morning, suppose we try that plan. I can set you there in an hour and a half, in my cutter."

Nothing could be more agreeable to Fergus than such a plan. The air was mild and calm, and the water smooth, and the shores of the lake exhibited uncommon brilliancy and beauty, the whole face of nature being brightened and refreshed by the rain.

It required very little time to mature their plan and complete their arrangements. An hour after dinner, they were all ready to embark. The boat was a small canoe, hollowed from a log, but well formed and finished, and of quite sufficient burden for the passengers she was to carry. Little Amos was to be of the party, and he stood delighted on

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The party set off from the shore.They are called back.

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the shore, while his father released the boat from its fastenings, and made all ready for the embarkation.

The road passed very near to the landing-place where the boat had been drawn up, and after the party had taken their seats, and had been propelled a few rods from the



THE BOAT-PARTY.

shore, their attention was aroused by loud shouts proceeding apparently from the landing-place that they had left. They turned around, and saw a man there waving his hat and calling out to them in a loud voice. M'Donner brought his boat round again head to the shore, and soon regained the beach.

"Are ye pulling to Fell's Point, neighbor?" said the stranger. He was apparently a man of considerable age, and his dress indicated poverty.

"Yes," replied M'Donner to his question.

"And how much will you charge to take me there?"

"Why—is it worth a quarter of a dollar?"

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M'Donner takes another passenger.

Appearance and manners of the stranger.

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"Yes, it is worth that, I suppose; but you must trust me till I get there."

"Why so?" said M'Donner.

"I haven't got the money now, but I shall get it there. I've been on the road now some days, and am tired of traveling. Besides, I can't get on any farther; the bridges are all gone."

The traveler had the money in his pocket, but he thought that if he could get landed at the Point before paying, he should be able to elude his creditor there, and save his fare. But M'Donner was too experienced a manager not to be on his guard against such an artifice as this. There was something in the traveler's whole appearance which had, at the first, excited his suspicion. A certain something about his dress marked a shiftless, roving character, and there was an air of ease and self-possession which evinced familiarity with the world, combined, however, with an expression of vulgarity, which indicated a low and degraded rank in it. Then there was a certain expressiveness of countenance, not cunning exactly, but something analogous to it, which marked an active intellect; and as active intellect conjoined with virtuous principle will almost always elevate, when it is seen in circumstances of degradation it is presumptive evidence of vice or crime.

M'Donner had no idea that his passenger intended to pay any fare when he should arrive at the Point, but this made no difference in his willingness to take him. He was an old man, and helping him on would evidently be a deed of charity. M'Donner accordingly gave him a friendly reception, as if suspecting no dishonesty, and the whole party were soon on their way again.

The old man talked for a while with a sort of gayety—the common forced gayety of the wicked—which, however, always sinks away into sadness when it encounters the real



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*The old man is hungry.**M'Donner gives him some food.*

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good-will and kindness of an honest friend. The heartless and hollow laugh maintains itself as long as it meets only something equally heartless and hollow in a companion; but before honest kindness it throws off its guise, and brings to view the loneliness and despondency which reign within.

The old man sat down in the bottom of the boat, leaning back against one of the thwarts. Fergus sat beyond him. M'Donner was in the stern, plying the paddle; little Amos upon a seat very near him, looking over into the water. The stranger drew out a small bottle from his pocket, and drank from it, and then offered it to M'Donner. M'Donner thanked him, but said he had no occasion for any drink. The traveler, as if beginning to perceive that he had got into company in which his habits required an apology, said, in excuse for drawing upon his "pistol," as he called his bottle, that he had had no dinner that day. Upon this, M'Donner immediately produced a wallet in which he had put up an ample supply of provisions for their expedition, and insisted upon his helping himself freely. He did this with so much apparent cordiality, that it produced an evident change in the man's whole demeanor. He became more serious. The air of assumed and hollow-hearted gaiety gradually gave place to a more sober and thoughtful air, which represented far more correctly the state of the heart within—a state of utter desolation.

His mode of talking, too, changed its character entirely. From the light and trifling tone of merriment and jest which he had assumed at first, it changed to a serious and even melancholy expression. M'Donner gradually led the conversation to serious subjects; and the traveler uttered many complaints of the trials and troubles of life, the selfishness and hard-heartedness of men, and the hard struggles, and disappointments, and sorrows which we have to encounter all along on the weary journey. These topics brought out

Progress of the voyage.

Half-way rock.

M'Donner's reflections.

the old man's feelings very strongly. Dissatisfaction with the world, resentment at his own real or supposed ill treatment, and a very vivid sense of the injustice, the selfishness, and the wickedness of men in general, seemed to be his prominent feelings, and he expressed them very freely.

M'Donner paddled the canoe along, the party in the boat talking on the above, and on many other subjects, in a very good-natured and pleasant manner for several miles. At length, as they were gliding along a smooth, sandy beach, which at this part of the pond formed the shore, M'Donner saw before him a rocky promontory, which was familiar to him as a landmark, being the half-way rock between his little farm and the Fell's Point to which he was bound. On doubling this promontory he knew that the place of their destination would come into view, and the sight reminded him that the time was approaching when he should take leave of his passengers, perhaps never to see them again. He perceived that they were both, in all probability, living entirely without God, and he felt a strong desire to do something to bring their souls to the peace and happiness which his own had found.

"What shall I do or say?" thought he. "How can I reach such hearts? How evident it is that I can do nothing. I can tell them what they ought to do, but who shall give them hearts to do it. I shall only awaken their anger by urging them to repent of their sins and return to God. Fergus will perhaps conceal his displeasure, though he will feel it as strongly; but then, as to the old man, he will, as likely as not, break out upon me in open fury. It is useless to make the attempt."

So saying, M'Donner paddled on a few strokes farther. He reflected how lost and hopeless his condition had been, and yet that God had had mercy upon him. "Why may he not," he added, "have mercy upon these?"

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M'Donner gives the conversation a religious turn.

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He reflected, moreover, that it was not his duty to *save* them, but only to *try* to save them. His part was to bring obvious religious truths to bear upon them, but it was for God to give it efficacy. "If therefore," he added, "I do what I can, I shall then feel satisfied that my duty is done, and shall rest to-night peaceful and happy, leaving the result in the hands of God."

Accordingly, after a silent prayer to God to give him right motives and feelings, and to aid him in his thoughts and words, he commenced conversation anew by asking the old man if he had heard a certain celebrated preacher who had been traveling through that part of the country, and attracting a good deal of attention.

"No, and never will, if I can help it," was the reply.

"Perhaps he isn't of your persuasion."

"Persuasion!" he answered; "I have no persuasion. I don't belong to any of your sects. My creed is a very short one—let a man do his duty well here, and he need not fear any trouble hereafter. I am very easy on that score."

"That is true, no doubt," said M'Donner; "but suppose a man does not do his duty?"

"Why, then he ought to expect to suffer for it."

"In another world?" asked M'Donner.

"I don't know about another world," said the old man; "I've never been there;" and he laughed laboriously, but not very heartily, at his joke.

M'Donner felt discouraged; but, reflecting that the responsibility resting upon him was not an obligation to succeed in bringing the sinner to repentance, but only to discharge his own duty in giving him a warning, he determined to pursue the conversation at least a little farther. While he was pausing, the old man, moving restlessly upon his seat, said,

"No; they tell about a change of heart, and such non-

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The law of God.The stranger's ideas of religious duty.

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sense; but my Bible tells me that to do justly and love mercy is religion; and if a man will do that, he has nothing to fear."

"Do justly, love mercy, and *walk humbly with God*,' I believe it is," said M'Donner, mildly.

"Like enough," said the old man.

"And a man must keep this command all the time."

"Why, yes, I suppose so," replied the old man.

"Certainly," added M'Donner, by way of establishing the point. "Because, you see, it won't do for a man to be just and merciful a part of the time, and unjust and cruel the other part. That would be no way to deserve heaven."

The old man did not answer, but he lay quietly in his place, gazing up at the clouds with an air of assumed indifference.

"And then walking humbly with God is a part of the rule," added M'Donner.

"I am no friend to hypocrisy," said the old man, after a short pause.

"No, I presume not; but that is the rule. If we wish to fit ourselves for heaven, we must do justly, love mercy, and *walk humbly with God* all our days, from childhood to old age. If we do so, I am satisfied that, as you say, we have nothing to fear."

The old man's mind reverted involuntarily to the scenes of his own past life. M'Donner had spoken the words "walk humbly with God" distinctly, though without any forced emphasis. They came to him like a sting. He moved a little, restlessly, but did not speak.

"No; you know very well, Mr. Josey, that neither you nor I can hope to reach heaven on any such ground as that."

"How did you know that my name was Josey?" asked the old man, starting up.

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What men are to look for is forgiveness, not reward.

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"Oh, I have seen you before," said M'Donner.

Josey looked him steadily in the face, and seemed to be trying to call to remembrance some lost thoughts, but in vain. He gradually fell back into his place.

"Then you know me, it seems?"

"I know enough of you to be very sure," replied M'Donner, "that the question for you, as well as for me, is not how the righteous will be *rewarded*, but how two wretched sinners may be *forgiven*."

This theology was too obvious to be called in question. Josey was silent.

"That's true," said Fergus, who had listened very attentively, but hitherto had not taken any part in the conversation; "we all do wrong, more or less, no doubt; but then God is not a tyrant. He won't hold us to impossibilities."

"He will hold us to our duty," said M'Donner.

"And he will forgive our shortcomings and failings," continued Fergus.

"I don't think we can get our sins off of our consciences," replied M'Donner, "by calling them shortcomings and failings. My burden is a great deal heavier than that."

The long years of utter ungodliness and impenitence which Fergus had spent, and a long catalogue of open and secret sins, came up to his mind, awakening a bitter but momentary recollection. He saw that his guilt consisted not in coming short of the right, but in going utterly and entirely wrong. He paused, lost a moment in reflection, but he did not reply.

"Now it seems to me very clear," added M'Donner, after having paddled on a few moments in silence, "that we all need a pretty thorough change and a pretty deep one. You have had some experience in the world, Mr. Josey; in fact, you have been telling us some of the results of it this

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Farther conversation with Josey.His ideas of prayer.

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afternoon. Now don't you think, yourself, that such men as you have had to deal with generally would have to be pretty thoroughly changed in their very natures before you could make up a heaven with them?"

"Why, there's another thing, now," said Josey; "these Christians pretend to be born again, and to have new hearts; but I don't see any great difference, after all. They are pretty much like other men. It is all hypocrisy."

"There's a great deal of truth in that, but it only shows how deceitful and desperately wicked the human heart is, and what a great change it needs to fit it for God and heaven. And besides," he continued, "however wicked and hypocritical other people may be, you know that is no help for us. We are bound to love and serve God, whatever other people may do or pretend to do."

"Why, we all love God," said Josey, "more or less. I don't make much pretension to religion, but I love God myself. I feel a great reverence for him."

"Do you pray to him?"

"Why—why—I don't think it necessary to make these hypocritical long prayers. A man may pray in one place as well as another. He may pray when he is walking, he may pray when he is at work. It is the heart, not the words, mind ye."

"I know that," said M'Donner; "and do you make a practice of praying when you are at work or walking?"

"Why, I believe every body does, more or less. Yes, I do myself. I often think of God when I see his works."

"But thinking of God is not praying to him."

"What is praying, then?"

"It is speaking to him—addressing him—going to him in heart. Thinking of him is no more praying to him than thinking of a man is going up and speaking to him. Now I think, if you look at it honestly and fairly, you will see

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Josey is quite confident that he does not hate God.

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that you are really living without prayer, and if you are, you can't have much love for him."

The old man was silent.

"And besides," continued M'Donner, "I should not wonder, judging of you by myself, if you should find, on looking carefully at it, that your feeling toward God is the opposite of love."

"What, hatred?" said the old man.

"Why, hatred is rather a harsh term. Perhaps I ought to say dislike, or aversion."

"No," said Josey, shaking his head with a very positive air, "no, you are mistaken there. I am sure I have no hatred toward God—no dislike at all. The thought of God is rather a pleasant thought, most generally."

"Well, now, does the idea of your going to God to-day—this afternoon—say as soon as you land and get into a place where you are alone—of going to him, and confessing all your sins, and asking him to forgive you, and to take care of you, and be your God and friend here and hereafter—does that look pleasant to you, or a little disagreeable?"

"Why—eh—yes, it looks pleasant enough."

"Well, will you do it?"

"Why, no, I won't make any such a promise as—"

"You see," interrupted M'Donner, "that if we find that going to God is disagreeable to us, and we shrink from it, and feel that we can not and will not do it, it must be because of some secret dislike to God in our hearts; for there is every reason to lead us to do it, if there was any real affection for him at all in our hearts."

Old Josey did not reply, but presently asked some question about a stream whose estuary he saw opening into the pond not far from where they were passing along. M'Donner, not desiring to force the subject upon his attention against actual resistance, allowed him to turn the conversa-

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He confesses his intended fraud.He leaves the boat.

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tion to other topics. Old Josey proposed to relieve M'Donner at the paddle, and having taken his seat in the stern, he drove the craft on with an evidently practiced arm. M'Donner continued the conversation on other topics in the same kind and cordial tone, which made a strong impression upon the old man's mind; he had not been much accustomed to kind words in his day; still, he felt ill at ease. M'Donner's words aroused remorse, and awakened gloomy forebodings. He wished to escape. The idea of abandoning his sins, and seeking reconciliation with God, was out of the question. He wished only to get out of the boat, and away from his new companions as soon as he could. He accordingly recollected that there was a place where he could land nearer, which would answer his purpose better than to go to the end of the voyage, and so he asked M'Donner to set him ashore.

"As to the quarter of a dollar," said he, "to tell you the honest truth, I was going to try to gammon you out of that when we got to Fell's Point. But you have given me a dinner, and treated me like a gentleman, and I'll treat you so. I'll pay you the money before I go ashore."

M'Donner told him he was welcome to his passage, and that he might paddle up to the shore where he liked. In a short time old Josey ran the bows of the canoe into a little copse at the shore, and stepped out into the thicket. He drew out an old leathern purse, and began to look for his quarter of a dollar, saying he should insist upon paying his fare.

"Well," replied M'Donner, "just as you say. I suppose, now, I shall never see you again, friend, and I want you to think a little as you walk along of what I have been saying. You have not much longer to live in this world; and if it is actually true, as I fear, that you really dislike God instead of loving him, it is time for you to know it."



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End of Josey's journey. Conversation resumed between M'Donner and Fergus.

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"Well, well, I'll think about it," said he; at the same time, handing the money to Fergus, who sat nearest, he added,

"There, pass that along, will ye, boy?"

Then shoving off the boat again, he disappeared in the forest. After walking on a few steps, he sat down upon a stone, and drew forth his "pistol." He slept that night, intoxicated, under the shelter of the trunk of an enormous tree which had been blown down by the wind.

In the mean time, M'Donner and Fergus glided rapidly on toward their place of destination. Several minutes were passed in silence. M'Donner wished to avoid pressing such subjects too far upon the unwilling attention of others, and yet, not knowing Fergus's state of mind, he was not disposed, himself, to turn the conversation to other topics.

"That's a strange sort of a man," said Fergus, at length, breaking the silence.

"Not very," replied M'Donner. "We are all pretty much the same. And how plain it is that divine power alone can change him!"

"That seems to me rather hard doctrine. You seem to think that we can not repent, ourselves, if we try."

"Why, judge for yourself, Fergus. Look into your own heart, and observe the alienation from God, the living without him, the disrelish for prayer and religious meditation, and that sort of hardness and stupor which we feel when we look upon our sins and try to repent of them. Now, can you change all these feelings by your own power, here, at once, into that sincere, and heartfelt, and warm gratitude and love to God—that sincere sorrow for sin, and desire to live, and move, and act hereafter in the presence of God, which we know we ought to feel?"

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Very profound metaphysical discussions.

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"Well," said Fergus, "then we are not free, that's all."

"No matter what consequences you may draw from it. The question is simply, what is the fact? Now, are you not conscious, directly and positively conscious, that you have no such power over your feelings of ungodliness and impenitence?"

"All I have to say about it is, that if that doctrine is true, man is not a free agent. You don't believe, yourself, that man is a free agent?"

"Certainly I do; he is a free *agent*. Agent means actor. He is a free actor; that is, he is, in most cases, left free to act according to the impulses of his character. To make him free, it is necessary that his determination and conduct should flow freely from his inward character, not that his inward character should be dependent upon his determinations, or that it should drift about at random, changing itself spontaneously without any cause."

Fergus had a clear head. He had had an idea of moral freedom consisting of a kind of mysterious uncertainty, a sort of contingency dependent on nothing, which left the heart open to absolutely causeless changes. He now obtained, for the moment, a glimpse of the subject in a new light—that freedom might, after all, consist in the unconstrainedness with which conduct flows from, and truly represents the elementary principles of character, and that it did not, or at least might not, imply any uncertainty or vacillation of the character itself. He saw himself more fixed in his impenitence and sins than he ever had done before, while yet he perceived that he was perfectly free in acting according to the desires of his heart, whatever they might be.

At this moment the boat was drawing pretty near to the shore. They were skirting the edge of a large patch of lily-pads which here extended into the pond.

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M'Donner's illustration.The imprisoned loon.

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"I can explain to you exactly what I mean," said he. "These lily-pads make me think of it. One day I was paddling about here, and we got a loon entangled in the pads so that he could neither dive nor fly. We finally caught him, and got a cord round his legs, just so that he could stand, and then tied him to the thwart. There he was confined; he was not a free agent at all."

"That's very plain," said Fergus, smiling.

"After a while he broke his cord away from the thwart, and flounced overboard, in among the lily-pads again."

"And was free again, I suppose you are going to say."

"No, not perfectly free yet. He was entangled in the pads, and then his legs were partially confined. But he floundered along among the pads until he got beyond them, into the clear water, and there he contrived to get upon the wing again; but he was not entirely free yet, for the cord hung dangling from his legs. Presently, however, that dropped off, and he flew, entirely free, away, off from the danger."

"Well?" said Fergus, as if waiting for the application of the story.

"Well," repeated M'Donner, "and what should you think if any one should say that he was not free, after all, because he had not power to change his fear of being caught into love of being caught, and so come right back into the boat again?"

"I don't know," said Fergus.

"I should think, myself, that would be rather shallow philosophy," said M'Donner.

"But a loon is not a moral agent."

"No; and I did not speak of any *moral* freedom in this case. It is the very nature of freedom itself that we are speaking about. The loon was a free agent so far as he was an agent at all, and we, in the same manner, are per-

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Fergus thinks that M'Donner's doctrine is discouraging.

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fectly free moral agents when we freely act according to our desires. It does not imply that we can change our bad desires into good ones, or our good ones into bad ones, by our own determinations to change them. If we are sinners, freedom will only lead us to act out our characters. God only can *change* them."

"Then we can not do any thing at all. It is discouraging doctrine enough, even if it is true."

"We had better know it, even though it be discouraging, if it is true; and it seems to me it is clearly true. A good man can not change his good feelings into bad ones at will, and a bad man can not change his bad feelings into good ones any easier. There is old Josey, now; don't you see very clearly that it is utterly beyond his power to transform himself into a humble, penitent, childlike follower of God merely by an act of his will? And if it is so, if our feelings of impenitence and alienation from God are fixed and permanent traits of character, which God only can change, we ought to know it."

"Why, it will do no good to know it, that I see," said Fergus, "for we can do nothing. Such doctrine as that only leads men to give up at once in despair."

"It leads them to give up, but not in despair; and giving up is just the way to find salvation. So long as men think their sinfulness is external and superficial, so that they can put it off or on at pleasure, so long they will postpone putting it off, and continue careless and unconcerned; but when they really see what a deep-seated and inveterate disease it is, and how hopeless is their condition without the aid of divine power, then they feel awakened and alarmed. And, at any rate, whether it is discouraging or not, that is the actual truth. It is the truth in your case, Fergus. If you have been living in impenitence and sin for the last ten years, you must not imagine that you can

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Fergus asks what he shall do.M'Donner's counsels.

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ever get yourself out of the difficulty. You are perfectly free, but that is what makes the danger; for you can see, yourself, if a heart is really estranged from God in its affections, that the more freedom there is, the farther it will go away. There is no hope of your ever being able to change yourself. If you are saved at all, it will be because God will change you."

"Then what is there that I can do?" said Fergus, despondingly, as the boat drew up toward the shore.

"I don't know what you can do. It is a hard case—a heart alienated from God, fixed and settled in its impenitence, and dislike of God and religious duty, and then left at *perfect liberty*. If you were less free, there might seem to be more hope, for restraint might hold you back from sin; but for one who is wicked in heart to be left *free* seems to be making his destruction sure. But I will tell you what I would do, Fergus. You are going to leave me now, to take a long, lonely walk through the woods. Now go to God with your whole case exactly as it is, and just lay it all before him, and call upon him for help. Give up all hope of saving yourself. Throw yourself upon God's mercy, and ask him to save you—to change the very feelings of your heart, so that it will be as easy and as pleasant for you to love and serve him, as it is now to neglect and forget him."

M'Donner's doctrine of the utter ruin and helplessness of sin, and of the entire dependence of the soul upon the interposing mercy of God for rescue and salvation, will probably be as unwelcome to many readers of this book as it was to Fergus. He was restless and uneasy under it. He found fault, mentally, with the inconsistency of M'Donner's views of his entire dependence upon the renewing power of the Holy Spirit in his soul, and advice to him to attempt any thing whatever. And there is a theoretical inconsist-

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Fergus takes leave of M'Donner and goes away.

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ency, which it is useless to deny. This difficulty, however, immense as it is, pertains to a region of metaphysical science, so hidden, so abstruse, so much beyond the boundaries of clear vision, that we brave it, following the example of the word of God. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do." In other words, "Man, do the work, for God alone *can* do it." What moral courage in the sacred writer in daring to urge such a direction upon such a ground!

Fergus left the boat, and bade his friends farewell with very grateful feelings. Whether he improved his solitary walk to come and cast himself upon the mercy of God or not, M'Donner never knew. He offered up a silent prayer for him as he pushed off his boat again, and then dismissed the subject from his mind. He felt that *his* duty was discharged; and commending the case to God, he felt a sort of satisfaction in the very uncertainty of the result. There was a sense of repose in God, in the position which his mind assumed, that was, just then, at least, a gratification. After propelling his canoe out to some distance upon the water, he turned his head and looked back upon the shore. He saw Fergus, seated upon a stone under the bushes, apparently following the canoe with his eye. He was too distant to be addressed again, even by a signal, and his form was soon lost from view.

M'Donner pressed forward with a light heart. His work was done, and his mind was in that state of peace and rest which enabled him to enjoy most highly the loveliness of the calm scene around him. He turned into the field of lily-pads to let Amos get some lilies. His little hand extended over the side of the boat, grasped the buds, and drew the long stems out of the water. They floated leisurely here for a quarter of an hour, moving slowly along

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M'Donner and little Amos return home.

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among the large green leaves that covered the surface of the water. Amos then coiled the lilies he had gathered into the crown of his cap, and his father paddled him home.

THE END.













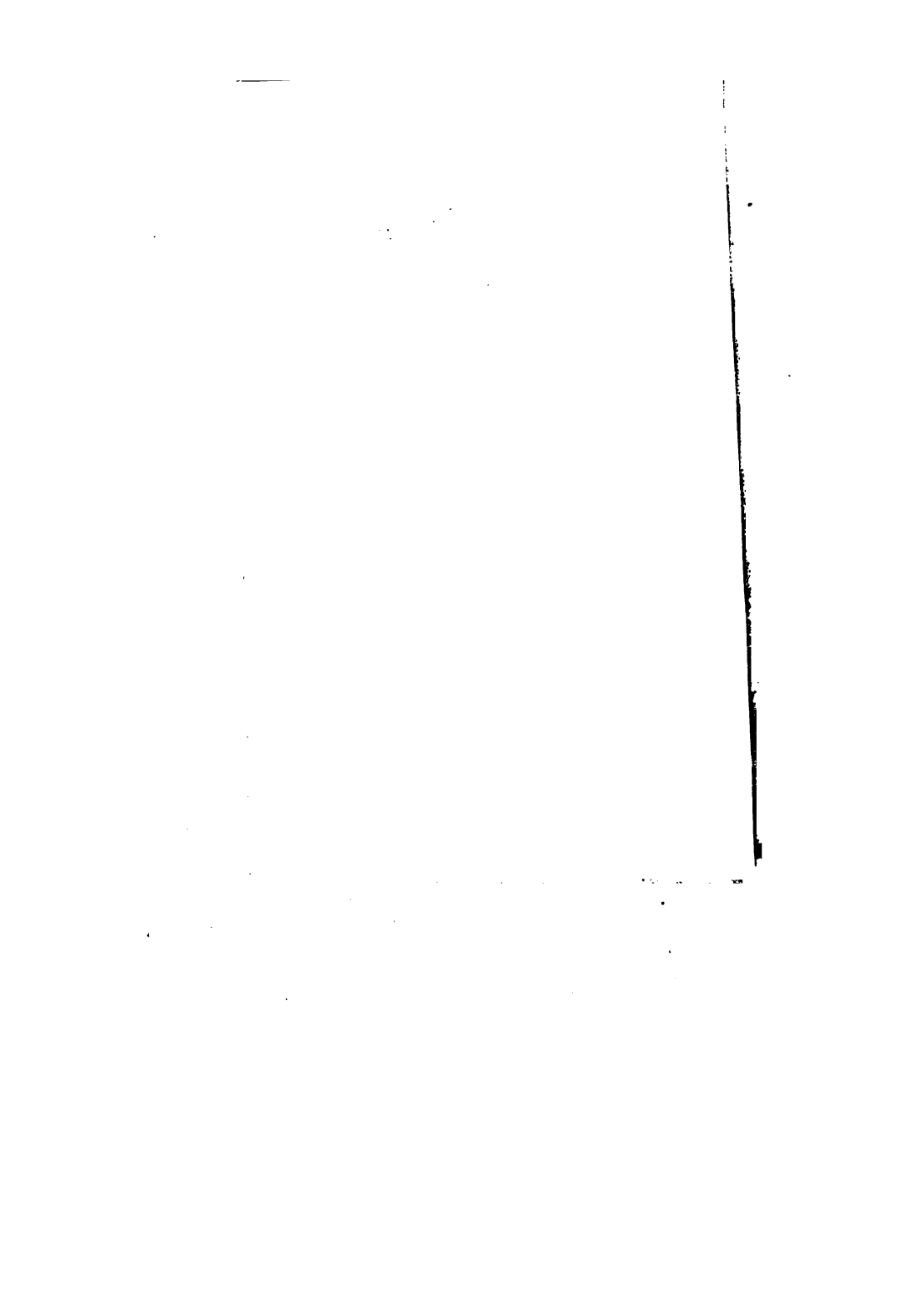












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